

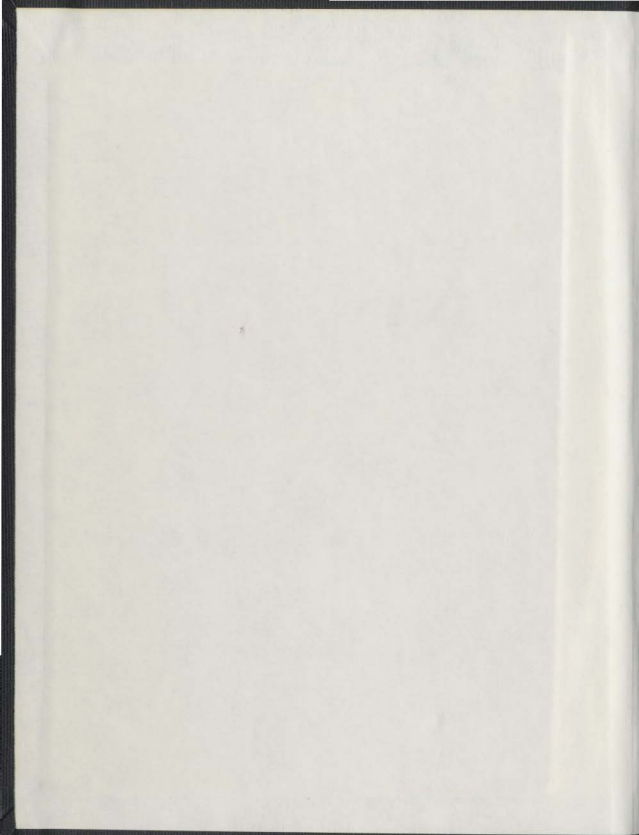
THE LYRICS OF RACE RECORD
BLUES, 1920-42: A SEMANTIC
APPROACH TO THE STRUCTURAL
ANALYSIS OF A FORMULAIC
SYSTEM

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MICHAEL ERNEST TAFT



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THE LYRICS OF RACE RECORD BLUES, 1920-1942:
A SEMANTIC APPROACH TO THE STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS
OF A FORMULAIC SYSTEM

by



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ABSTRACT

From 1920 to 1942 the major record companies in the United States began producing records for the Afro-American record-buying public. These records were known as "race records." Over this twenty-two year period, hundreds of black artists recorded thousands of blues songs. For most of these performers, the recording context was simply one more way of making a living through their artistry, but this context made demands upon their talents and upon their creative abilities which were not made in other performance contexts. Because of the lack of visual contact with an audience, the two-hundred-second time-limit on the songs, and the pressure by record company officials for ever-new and innovative material, the lyrics of the race record blues became a highly complex and compact form of song in this new performing environment, relying heavily on short, aphoristic pronouncements and concise poetic imagery.

At the same time, however, race record lyrics were highly formulaic in structure. In this study, the nature of this formulaic structure is described.

Part One of this study defines the blues according to its text, texture, and context. Special care is taken to explain the many different performance contexts in which the blues was sung, from house parties, juke joints and picnics, to cabarets, circuses, and stage shows. The recording context is described in detail, and the effects of the race record performance upon other types of performances is explored.

In Part Two of this study, the structure of the blues is described. The basic unit of the structure of the blues is the formula, which is usually a half-line in length, but which can also include an entire blues line. The best way of visualizing the formula is as a generalized, semantic

predication in which each part of the predication may generate a number of different words and phrases in the surface manifestation of the formula. Depending upon one's analytical focus, therefore, different phrases may be seen as either different manifestations of the same formula, or as separate formulas. This is because the generalized predication is a fluid structure with an almost infinite number of manifestations on a continuum of meaning.

One of the paradoxes of blues structure, then, is that the formula is both a theoretical construction and a concrete reality of blues composition. As one moves one's focus from blues compositional competence to actual blues performance, the structure of the blues formula becomes more concrete and it acquires definable boundaries. It is at the level of blues performance, rather than blues competence, that the formula becomes a truly useful tool in the study of blues structure. In one chapter in Part Two, the recorded repertoire of Garfield Akers is analyzed formulaically, in order to show the usefulness of the concept of the formula in actual blues performance.

Another paradox of blues structure is that, although it is clearly a formulaic system, it is nevertheless infinitely expandable within this system. The blues singer could be both traditional and innovative at the same time in his composition. This paradox is partly explained by the flexibility of the formula, but innovation is also achieved through the embellishment of blues formulas with a wide variety of extraformulaic elements. In addition, the ways in which formulas, lines, and stanzas are juxtaposed allows further room for innovation. The blues structure is both rigid and flexible at the same time.

The findings of this study are based on an extensive analysis of

over two thousand blues texts by approximately 350 singers. A computer was used in order to rearrange the lyrics into a concordance format. In this format, the formulaic structure of the blues became clearly visible, and individual formulaic structures could be easily isolated.

In the appendices to this study, the twenty most frequently recurring formulas in the corpus are described. All occurrences of two of these twenty formulas are listed in order to show the wide variation and flexibility possible within formulaic structure. The study also includes a complete listing of the corpus used in the analysis, as well as a bibliography and discography of references cited.

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No scholarly task is done in isolation. All theories and approaches, of necessity, build upon the previous work of others, and thus I am in debt to countless scholars, both to those who are my seniors and to my contemporaries. I can name only a few here.

Perhaps I should begin by thanking the man who inspired me to undertake the study of the formula, Robert P. Creed. My adviser, Neil V. Rosenberg, kept this inspiration alive through his teachings, conversations, and his critical reading, not only of this dissertation, but of other work on the blues which I have attempted. I owe him much thanks.

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This dissertation might well have foundered, despite all the help I received, if it were not for Michael J. Preston. He introduced me to computer technology and showed me how I might approach my material in a sane and practical manner. For his constant encouragement and his selfless labours on my behalf, I am deeply grateful. I must also thank Samuel S. Coleman, whom I have never met, but whose theories of computer concordance-making allowed me to complete my task.

For reading parts of the rough draft, I thank John Scott, and for going over the final copy, I am indebted to Dr. Herbert Halpert. For their encouragement and profitable discussions, I am especially grateful to William J. Kirwin, Peter Narváez, and Jeff Titon.

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I am indebted to the Folklore Department at Memorial University of Newfoundland for contributing their computer time to my project. I must also thank the Folklore Department and the School of Graduate Studies at Memorial University for financing my work through fellowships, assistantships, and travel grants.

Much of the help I received came indirectly. The thought that went into this study evolved as I learned more and more about folklore. Thus, seemingly unrelated topics helped, indirectly, in forming the theories and approaches set down in this dissertation. Because this acknowledgement is the only chance I'll have to thank all those who have helped me to learn the discipline of folklore, and because I cannot properly separate the process of writing this dissertation from my general, educational development, I should like to acknowledge my gratitude to the following

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	11
INTRODUCTION	1
METHODOLOGY	11
 PART ONE: AN OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF THE BLUES	 25
I DEFINING THE BLUES: AN INTRODUCTION	26
II THE TEXTURE AND TEXT OF THE BLUES	34
III THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXTS OF THE BLUES	58
IV THE CULTURAL CONTEXT OF THE BLUES	73
V PERFORMANCE CONTEXTS OF THE BLUES	87
VI BLUES IN A RECORDING CONTEXT	117
VII THE EFFECTS OF CONTEXT ON BLUES PERFORMANCE AND REPERTOIRE	150
VIII THE INFLUENCE OF THE RECORDING ON THE PERFORMER AND ON PERFORMANCE CONTEXTS	176
IX THE PERFORMER CONTEXT OF THE BLUES	190
 PART TWO: A STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF THE BLUES	 208
X COMPOSING RACE RECORD BLUES	209
XI THE FORMULAIC NATURE OF THE BLUES: PAST SCHOLARSHIP	222
XII THE BLUES FORMULA: A DEFINITION	230
XIII EXTRAFORMULAIC ELEMENTS IN BLUES LYRICS	265
The Paralinguistic Element (Para)	266
The Exclamatory Element (X)	268
The Vocatory Element (Voc)	269
The Locutionary Element (PN _{loc})	271

The Auxiliary Element (PN _{aux})	273
Other Embedding Elements (PN _{emb})	274
The Adjectival and Adverbial Elements (PN _{adj} and PN _{adv})	277
The Negation Element (Neg)	283
XIV FORMULAS INTO LINES, LINES INTO STANZAS, STANZAS INTO SONGS	288
Formulas Into Lines	288
Lines Into Stanzas	300
Stanzas Into Songs	314
XV THE FORMULAIC ANALYSIS OF THE RECORDED REPERTOIRE OF GARFIELD AKERS: AN APPLICATION OF THE THEORY	321
"Cottonfield Blues--Part 1" (AKER-1)	327
"Cottonfield Blues--Part 2" (AKER-2)	348
"Dough Roller Blues" (AKER-3)	362
"Jumpin' and Shoutin' Blues" (AKER-4)	373
XVI SOME SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS AND OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING THE BLUES FORMULA	391
What Are the Sources of the Blues Formula?	391
What Are the Functions of the Formulaic Structure in the Blues?	398
Does the Formulaic System Itself Reflect the Social Context in Which the Blues Was Performed?	404
Does the Formulaic Study of the Blues Have Any Implications for Formulaic Scholarship in General?	411
SUMMARY	416
THE BLUES CORPUS UNDER ANALYSIS	422
BIBLIOGRAPHY OF REFERENCES CITED	485
DISCOGRAPHY	509
APPENDIX A: A DESCRIPTION OF SOME OF THE MOST FREQUENTLY RECURRING FORMULAS IN THE CORPUS UNDER ANALYSIS	521
+human have the blues (x-formula)	523
+human come to some place (x-formula)	526
+human go away from some place (x-formula)	529

<u>+human got/have +human (x-formula)</u>	531
<u>+human leave/quit +human (x-formula)</u>	532
<u>+human love +human (x-formula)</u>	534
<u>+human speak to +human (x-formula)</u>	535
<u>+human treat +human in some manner (x-formula)</u>	538
<u>some thing worry +human (x-formula)</u>	541
<u>+human have the blues (r-formula)</u>	543
<u>+human cry (r-formula)</u>	544
<u>+human do unspecified action (r-formula)</u>	547
<u>+human go some place (r-formula)</u>	550
<u>+human grieve (r-formula)</u>	552
<u>+human come home (r-formula)</u>	554
<u>time won't be long (r-formula)</u>	556
<u>+human have some thing on +human's mind (r-formula)</u>	558
<u>+human treat +human right (r-formula)</u>	561
<u>APPENDIX B: THE x-FORMULA +HUMAN WAKE UP</u>	563
<u>APPENDIX C: THE r-FORMULA +HUMAN LEAVE TOWN</u>	586

INTRODUCTION

This study began more than ten years ago. As an undergraduate student at the State University of New York at Stony Brook, I was allowed to attend a graduate seminar in Anglo-Saxon poetry taught by Robert Creed. Creed approached this poetry as an oral formulaic art form, and I soon learned of the complexities of oral composition, of the interplay between the metrical constraints and the thematic and linguistic limitations imposed upon the Anglo-Saxon scop. That such a seemingly rigid poetic structure could yield a creative, expressive art form truly fascinated me.

At the same time, I was becoming increasingly interested in Afro-American blues. As with others in my generation, my musical tastes tended towards folksong revival: from the Kingston Trio and the Limeliters to Joan Baez and Bob Dylan. Some of the blues-like songs of singers such as Dylan especially appealed to me and I soon narrowed my tastes to the more "bluesy" folksong revival singers, such as Dave Van Ronk and Eric Von Schmidt.

Inevitably, I was led to the major blues source for most of these singers, Huddie Ledbetter (or Leadbelly). I bought a number of his records and then began to search for similar singers. The first group of blues singers which caught my attention were the so-called "rediscoveries", such as John Hurt, Skip James, Son House, and Washington "Bukka" White. At almost the same time, I stumbled upon the Prestige/Bluesville record label, which recorded many of the lesser-known rediscoveries and contemporary blues artists, such as Willie Borum, Scrapper Blackwell, Lonnie Johnson, K. C. Douglas, Alec Seward, and Henry Townsend.

Invariably, the notes on these records mentioned that many of these singers had recorded for obscure and long-defunct record companies in the

1920's and 1930's, and I began to search for the early output of these artists. Thus I became aware of the reissue record companies which specialized in the pre-war recordings of blues singers. I started my reissue collection by buying Belzona (later Yazoo), Biograph, and Blues Classics albums. Later I discovered the older reissue labels, such as Origin Jazz Library and Historical Records, and ultimately I became aware of the European companies, such as Roots, Saydisc, and Collector's Classics.

My academic interest in Anglo-Saxon poetry and my layman's delight in blues songs very quickly began to merge, as I discovered formulaic patterns in the lyrics of the blues which seemed, perhaps coincidentally, very similar to the patterns which I was learning to distinguish in the poetry of the Anglo-Saxons. The more I learned from Creed, the more clearly I saw a formulaic system in the songs of these Afro-American singers.

My intuitions about the nature of blues composition remained both disorganized and unarticulated until I became a graduate student in English literature at York University in Toronto. While in this programme, I took a course in linguistics from Michael Gregory and a course in stylistics from Richard Handscombe. The methodologies and terminologies of linguistics enabled me, for the first time, to examine my intuitions in a critical and scientific manner, and I wrote my first paper on the subject of blues formulas for Handscombe.

My literary and linguistic training, however, was not sufficient. I knew nothing about oral poetry, music, folksong, or Afro-American folklore. It was not until I became a graduate student in folklore at Memorial University of Newfoundland that I obtained the scholarly background and theoretical underpinnings necessary to carry out a study of the formulaic structure of blues lyrics. The folklorists and linguists at Memorial

University nearly completed my training, which had started with Creed. My introduction to the world of computer technology, which will be discussed shortly, was the final ingredient.

This study, then, is a structural analysis of the formulaic composition of blues lyrics, and, more specifically, of the blues lyrics recorded by Afro-American singers for the pre-World War II race record companies. The nature of the blues formula and the processes involved in creating a lyric out of these structural formulas will be defined and described. The end result will be a clearly articulated and detailed account of what my intuitions first told me was the nature of blues lyric composition.

As will be shown, the idea that blues lyrics are composed of formulaic units is not new; its roots extend to the early part of this century. There has, however, never been a truly rigorous and scientific investigation of this phenomenon. Most scholars have simply acknowledged that formulas play some role in blues composition, or, at most, have undertaken small and limited comparative studies of different blues lyrics. A step-by-step description of the rules implicit in the formulaic theory of blues composition has never before been attempted.

By comparison, the musical structure of the blues has been most rigorously examined. Musician-scholars have been quick to point out the peculiarities of blues musical composition; for example, the record notes to most of the Yazoo reissue albums give testimony to the wide-spread musicological sophistication of both scholars and laymen. Musicologists and ethnomusicologists are well-equipped to describe, in a scientific manner, the musical structure of the blues. Shockett and Titon have done two of the more extensive studies in this

area.¹

Titon's study in particular is of special relevance to the present undertaking. In a chapter entitled, "Musical Analysis: Towards a Song-Producing System," he describes a system of "skeleton tunes" which, through transformational-type processes, generate the surface tunes which the blues singer used for his compositions. These skeleton tunes correspond quite closely to the deep-structure blues formulas which form the basis of lyric composition in the blues. Titon's use of linguistic theory and terminology is particularly relevant to the present study.

The reason that the structural study of blues music has progressed more rapidly than that of blues lyrics is largely due to the advanced state of musicological studies. In the field of musicology, the scholar has a system of theories and methodologies which can be readily applied to the study of blues music. It may be an oversimplification to say that music is a logical and well-ordered mathematical construction, but the fact remains that the physical properties of music can be measured and recorded in a most exacting and scientific fashion.

By contrast, the student of blues lyrics has no readily accessible set of theories and methodologies which he can apply to his analysis. Blues lyrics, like all poetry, involve the clever use of language; it is dependent upon special phonological, lexical, syntactical, and semantic limitations and options which overlay the general rules of everyday language. This being the case, the proper scientific approach to the study of blues lyric structure must lie in the discipline

¹ Bernard J. Shockett, "A Stylistic Study of the Blues as Recorded by Jazz Instrumentalists, 1917-1931," Diss. New York Univ. 1964; and Jeff Titon, Early Down Home Blues: A Musical and Cultural Analysis (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, forthcoming).

of linguistics.

In comparison with musicology, however, linguistics is at a very early and elemental stage of development. If language is, like music, a logical mathematical system, linguists have yet to understand the massive complexities of this system. All linguistic theories are tentative and precarious, and the scholarly literature in this field is largely composed of re-definitions, new paradigms, theoretical disputes, and debates on the most basic and elemental aspects of language. Every new theory and every new linguistic description seems to raise as many questions as it answers. No linguist would admit to having done more than scratch the surface of our understanding of human language. In Chomsky's words: "The tentative character of any conclusions that can now be advanced concerning linguistic theory, or, for that matter, English grammar, should certainly be obvious to anyone working in this area."²

The problems of the lyrical analyst as opposed to the musical analyst of the blues are clear. But the problems go beyond the elementary stage of linguistic theories. For the most part, linguists have studied competence, rather than performance, in human language:

Linguistic theory is concerned primarily with an ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogeneous speech-community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristic) in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance. This seems to me to have been the position of the founders of modern general linguistics, and no cogent reason for modifying it has been offered. To study actual linguistic performance, we must consider the interaction of a variety of factors, of which the underlying competence of the speaker-hearer is only one. In this respect, study of language is no different from empirical investigation of other complex phenomena.³

² Noam Chomsky, Aspects of the Theory of Syntax (Cambridge: The M.I.T. Press, 1965), p. v.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

Folklorists, on the other hand, are more concerned with performance than with competence; that is, actual speech acts, rather than ideal situations, are of primary interest in folklore. In addition, the special rules which govern poetic speech are quite different from those which govern the language as a whole. Poetic rules are almost never inflexible, and the study of lyrical structure is the study of what is more or less "acceptable" within the framework of the poetic form. As Chomsky points out, however, acceptability "is a concept that belongs to the study of performance, whereas grammaticalness belongs to the study of competence" (p. 11). There is, thus, a major difference in the way linguists and folklorists view language, and the application of linguistic theories to actual speech events, such as blues lyrics, must take this into account.

This study is concerned primarily with blues performance rather than blues competence. Almost all of the hundreds of lyric examples in this study were transcribed, verbatim, from actual blues performances, and those few which were not from actual sung texts have been clearly marked. The rules of formulaic composition have been derived from these examples, rather than from hypothetical, ideal blues structures.

It would be deceptive, however, to say that this study is entirely divorced from the examination of blues competence. My intuitions about blues structure were initially based on notions of competence, and were subsequently developed and clarified through the study of blues performances. As Chomsky wrote, it is neither possible nor desirable to ignore competence in empirical investigations.

In outlining the formulaic structure of blues lyrics, I was again forced to deal with competence as well as performance. Of necessity,

such a description relies on generalizations and on an understanding of what the "ideal" blues lyric would contain. Thus, in the following chapters, rules of competence will be formulated, but actual blues performances will be cited as examples. This led to the problem of not being able to discover appropriate examples from the corpus of blues lyrics, although, ideally, such examples could exist. Conversely, there were a number of examples from blues performances which seemed to contradict the rules of competence which I had established. The linguist may call these contradictions "errors (random or characteristic) in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance," but the folklorist cannot so easily dispense with the anomalies and peculiarities of actual performance.

The result of this conflict between ideal forms and real texts is a description of the blues formulaic system which becomes clearer and more exacting as one moves one's focus from the structure of the entire corpus of the blues towards specific blues lyrics. As will be pointed out, the whole concept of the "formula" is as much a theoretical construction of the analyst as it is a reality of blues structure. This paradox will be explained in subsequent chapters, but it relates directly to the question of competence versus performance. Because this study is more directly concerned with performance than with competence, the definitions and descriptions of blues structure become more precise when applied to performed texts than when applied to ideal or generalized notions of the blues. If this were a linguistic, rather than a folkloristic, study, the reverse would be true; precise rules would describe the ideal blues lyric, while actual song texts would deviate to a lesser or greater extent from those rules.

Bearing this in mind, this study should not be considered a linguistic, or more specifically, a semantic analysis. The title correctly calls this study a "semantic approach." Linguistics will be used as a tool to help describe the formulaic structure of the blues, and it is thus a means rather than an end in itself. A true linguistic analysis of blues lyrics would be a much different study than the one undertaken here. As already stated, poetry is dependent upon an overlay of restrictions and licence upon the already existing rules of language. It is this overlay of rules which is the concern of this dissertation, rather than the rules of language itself.

Because linguistics is a means rather than an end in this study, its theories and terminologies have been used with a certain amount of freedom, which may not meet with the approval of some linguists. There are undoubtedly a great many "fudge" factors to be found in the following pages; a "fudge" being, in semanticist Lakoff's words, "a factor which you add to what you've got to give you what you want to get."⁴ But Lakoff has properly placed the "fudge" factor in the field of linguistics:

Fudges . . . are to a large extent necessary at this point in history, since relatively little is known about linguistics. If one is even to attempt a formal description which approaches correctness in some small way, one is forced to use a great many fudges and to hope that they are all irrelevant to the issue under discussion. When you discover that they are not irrelevant, and this is more often than not the case, you have learned something new about linguistics.⁵

Similarly, it is hoped that the linguistic fudges in this study will

⁴ George Lakoff, "Foreword," in Where the Rules Fail: A Student's Guide: An Unauthorized Appendix to M. K. Burt's From Deep to Surface Structure, ed. Ann Borkin and David Peterson (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Linguistics Club, 1972), p. ii.

⁵ Ibid., p. iii.

not adversely affect the analytical conclusions about blues structure.

Because linguistic terminology and theory is being used here rather informally, as a descriptive tool, the reader need not be a linguist himself to understand this study. Some understanding of transformational grammar would, of course, be an asset, but it is only sufficient to know that language is made up of many levels of structure, each level helping to generate the next higher structure as one moves from the deep to the surface manifestation of a speech event. As with Tilton's skeleton tunes, there are "skeletal" formulas in the deep structure of the blues which generate the surface level words, phrases, and sentences which the singer sings. The theories and terminologies of semantics, as well as syntax and phonetics will be used, with explanation, to help describe this process.

If this study, then, is not a linguistic analysis, how is it to be characterized? It is a structural analysis. This means that the mechanics of composition are of primary importance to this thesis. Textural and textual features are of importance only in the way that they relate to the mechanics of blues composition. Thus the "formula" to be studied here is a structural one. There are other types of formulas in poetry, such as thematic formulas and stylistic formulas, but these will not be considered here, except, again, as they relate to the structural analysis of the blues. In summary, the corpus is the blues, the approach is semantic, the analysis is structural, and the theory is formulaic.

This study is divided into three sections. The first is a long operational definition and description of the blues. The textural and textual features of this song form will be discussed as will be the various contexts in which the blues was performed. It will be shown that the blues

was a highly complex phenomenon and that it was performed in many different contexts. Special care will be taken to describe the recording context, for this is the type of blues performance with which this study is concerned.

The second section is the actual description of the formulaic structure of the blues. This section includes a "case study" of the repertoire of one singer, Garfield Akers, which will clearly show the application of the theory to performance as opposed to competence situations. The appendices make up the third section. They are a continuation of the description of blues formulaic structure, but are concerned more specifically with the twenty most frequent formulas in the blues and their many manifestations.

There is also a listing of the entire corpus; that is, all songs and singers which were considered in this analysis. Finally, there is a discography and Bibliography of all references cited in the study.

METHODOLOGY

In a structural analysis, proper and consistent methodology is essential. The criteria for selecting the corpus of texts for analysis and the way in which the analysis is carried out will determine, to a great extent, the findings of the study. The methodology employed in this study has evolved through a process of trial-and-error, and several approaches to the material had to be abandoned before the proper method of analysis was discovered.

The first task was to select a corpus of texts to be analyzed. I decided to keep the criteria for selection as broad as possible, since it is better to be too inclusive than too exclusive in such a study. Thus, I decided that any song recorded commercially by an Afro-American between the dates of 1920 and 1942, which in part or whole conformed to the textural criteria of the blues, could be considered for inclusion in the corpus. The textural criteria will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter II, but suffice it to say that songs which contained stanzas made up of some variation on a rhymed couplet with a caesura in each line were acceptable.

I made no distinction between the supposed country singers and urban singers, the female vaudeville artists and the down-home male singers, or any of the other sub-categories into which blues singers have been placed by scholars. The primary criterion was the race record more than the type of artist who was on it. Thus, this is the study of the blues as found on race records, regardless of their singer or source.

My immediate source for such songs was not the original race records themselves; they are now rare and expensive items, and my corpus would have been quite small if I had to depend upon the original discs. Fortunately,

there are many record companies which have reissued these songs on long-playing albums, and these albums were my source for the blues texts.

There is a problem, however, in relying on reissued songs for one's corpus. In effect, the reissue record companies, by selecting which songs they will re-record, impose an unwanted set of criteria upon those of the analyst. Anyone who collects blues reissues knows that some artists are consistently reissued, whereas others are just as consistently ignored. Whether because of personal aesthetics of the record company officials, or because of the rarity of originals, some race record artists have been but poorly represented on long-playing albums. Aesthetics, as one scholar has pointed out, is the major reason:

Every knowledgeable Blues Critic from Sam Charters on down has subscribed to the line of jive that the Bluebird Beat was dull, boring, mechanical, computerized stuff, which took blues out of the country and country out of the blues. Rural bluesmen like Bo Carter, Tommy McClennan, and Robert Petway were okay, but the Melrose Mess by Eddie Boyd, Washboard Sam, Jazz Gillum, Sonny Boy Williamson, Tampa Red and co. had little to recommend it. Unfortunately a lot of people swallowed all that and in consequence many of these artists whom I love have suffered badly in the reissue stakes.¹

Fortunately, there have been some record company officials whose aesthetics do not conform to the above description, and there are few artists who are not represented to some extent on reissue albums. I have purposely searched for records which do contain the lesser-known (or lesser-liked) artists in order to balance the corpus under analysis. Still, despite my searching, there are no examples in the corpus from such prolific

¹ J[ohn] B[roven], review of The Guitar Wizard, 1935-1953, Blues Classics BC-25, Blues Unlimited, No. 110 (1974), p. 26.

singers as Leothus Green, Viola McCoy, and Lucille Hegamin. Other singers, such as Buddy Moss, Mamie Smith, or Charlie Spand are not represented in proper proportion to the number of records they made. Still others, such as Tommy Johnson and John Hurt, are probably over-represented in this study, because of their high popularity in the reissue market.

The only solution to this unwanted selectional restriction was to include enough songs in the corpus that the inclusion or exclusion of any one song, or any one artist for that matter, would not be statistically significant. Therefore, the corpus is very large. It includes all relevant material from most of the more accessible reissue albums (Biograph, Blues Classics, Folkways, Historical, Collector's Classics, Roots, Yazoo, RBF, Origin Jazz Library) as well as material from many smaller and more obscure labels.

The result is a corpus of approximately 2,140 songs sung by about 350 singers. This is approximately one fifth of all the blues songs which were recorded during the race record era.² Singers who were particularly prolific, such as Lemon Jefferson, Memphis Minnie, and Bessie Smith, tend to be represented in proportion, not as a result of any conscious effort, but because of their reissue popularity.

I do not believe that the unwanted selectional restrictions of the reissue record companies have seriously affected this analysis; the very size of the corpus would seem to solve the problem. The next task was to transcribe these songs. Again, this was no simple matter, and several choices and methods of transcription had to be decided upon. A type of

² John Godrich and Robert M. W. Dixon, Blues & Gospel Records 1902-1942, 2nd ed. (London: Storyville, 1969), list approximately 10,000 records which may be blues.

transcription had to be used which would facilitate a structural analysis.

It was important for this formulaic analysis that spellings of words be standardized and that dialect spellings be kept to a minimum. Thus, goin' was transcribed as going, 'cause was transcribed as because, and gonna was transcribed as going to. Such dialect spellings are actually very inaccurate phonetic transcriptions, and I felt that either the songs should be transcribed using the accepted International Phonetic Alphabet or using standard English spellings. As this is not a study of blues dialect, I could see no advantage to using a phonetic transcription in this analysis. I therefore opted for a standard English transcription.

This does not mean that dialect words or sentence constructions were changed. I ain't going, look a-heré, I goes, faro, hoodoo and other such features of the singers' dialects were transcribed as sung. Thus syntax and lexis have been preserved in the transcriptions, but pronunciation has not.

Punctuation has been kept to a minimum. Semi-colons and commas have been used, where necessary, to indicate a division between two formulas in a line, but periods, colons, and other such marks did not seem necessary to either the understanding of the lyrics or the analysis. Of course, where the meaning of a phrase might be ambiguous without punctuation, the proper marks have been inserted.

As will be seen, lines within the blues couplet are often repeated, sometimes exactly and sometimes with slight variations. This presented the greatest problem of transcription. Because this analysis is concerned with the discovery of recurrent structural patterns, or formulas, in blues lyrics, the recurrent textural pattern of repeated lines within stanzas could only confuse and complicate this study. Note, for example, this

stanza from Lemon Jefferson's "Long Distance Moan":

I'm flying to South Carolina; I got to go there this time
 I'm flying to South Carolina; I got to go there this time
 Women in Dallas Texas is about to make me lose my mind

Although the first line of this stanza is repeated, it is not necessarily formulaic; rather, because of the textural peculiarities of the blues, first lines of stanzas are liable to be repeated, regardless of whether they are formulaic or not.

In order to make the transcribed texts more workable or presentable for analysis, I did not transcribe repetitions of lines within stanzas.

Thus, the above stanza was transcribed as

I'm flying to South Carolina; I got to go there this time
 Women in Dallas Texas is about to make me lose my mind

The stanza, in this form, is much easier to visualize and to compare with other stanzas when looking for structural patterns.

If the repetitions of a line were exact, as in the above example, there was no problem; however, when there was any variation in the repetitions, a choice had to be made as to which variant of the line to transcribe. I established a rule of thumb concerning the magnitude of variation. If the variation was very slight--a change in tense, an addition or variation in an exclamation, a shift to a contraction--I simply transcribed the first singing of the line and made no note of its subsequent repetitions.

If, however, the variation was more substantial, such as a change in lexis or syntax, I did note the change in the transcription. Observe the following stanza by Jefferson:

I begun to walk; walked till my feet got soaking wet
 I commenced to walking; walked till my feet got soaking wet
 Trying to find good home mama; man I ain't found none yet

The variations in the first halves of the repeated line are quite sub-

stantial and are worth noting in this analysis. My transcription, therefore, took the following form:

I (begun)(commenced) to (walk)(walking); walked till my feet
feet got soaking wet
Trying to find good home mama; man I ain't found none yet

The pairs of words enclosed in parentheses are mutually exclusive within this stanza.

If a word is inserted in the repetition of a line which had no counterpart in the first singing of the line, I transcribed it in the following manner:

I was drinking all night (long); got up this morning sloppy drunk
I would pack my things, but somebody done stole my trunk

If, on the other hand, the variations between the first and second line of a stanza were so different from each other that they were, in fact, not repetitions, the entire three-line stanza would be transcribed. Note this stanza from King Solomon Hill's "Down On My Bended Knees":

Ohh baby now hear my lonesome plea
Ohh down on my bended knees
I'm worried about my baby; bring her back to me

I used the following symbols in the transcriptions:

- * Parts of transcriptions which I was unsure of are enclosed in asterisks; for example, "my poor grandma *what* had them too."
- ??? Words and phrases which I could make no sense out of are represented as a series of question marks; for example, "She will ??? to your weakness."
- / As a further visual aid, I placed diagonals between suspected formulas in a line, or, if there was only one formula in a line, I inserted the diagonal at the half-line caesura; for example, "Listen here woman / I'm calling your name. This mark, however, has been removed from the transcriptions as printed in this dissertation.

The aim of the transcription was to make the blues texts as clear as possible to the analytic eye without distorting them or bowdlerizing them. In this I think I succeeded.

The actual process of transcription involved the following steps:

1. The songs on the record albums were re-recorded onto audio tape.
2. These tapes were then listened to on special transcribing tape recorders from which printed transcriptions were typed.
3. Where the lyrics of a song appeared in a book or in record notes, I listened to the song and checked it against the transcription. At no time did I rely solely on someone else's transcription without listening to the song myself.

Each transcribed song was given an identification code, based upon the singer and the song. Each singer was assigned an acronym which corresponded exactly to that singer's alphabetical order in relation to the other singers in the corpus. Each song of the singer was assigned a number based on the chronological order of the singer's recorded repertoire.³ Thus, Blind Lemon Jefferson was assigned the acronym JEFB, and, for example, his song "Long Distance Moan" was assigned the code JEFB-67. This does not necessarily mean that "Long Distance Moan" was the sixty-seventh song which Jefferson recorded; rather, of all the songs which were transcribed for this study, "Long Distance Moan" was the sixty-seventh song which Jefferson recorded. All future examples from the corpus will be marked with the appropriate code, and this code can be checked against the listing of the corpus at the end of this study.

Once the corpus had been transcribed, the analysis could begin. The

³ Godrich and Dixon were the source of this information.

problem, however, was how to glean the recurrent patterns, the structural formulas, from this massive corpus. As will be shown, the formula is not a set of specific words; it is, rather, a semantic construction which may generate a number of different surface manifestations. Because of the elusive nature of the blues formula, my greatest need was to find a way of visualizing the corpus so that the formulaic patterns would become apparent.

When I hear a blues song, I can immediately identify the formulas, since I have listened to enough songs that formulaic patterns are firmly implanted in my memory. But recognizing the formulas when they are sung is only the first step in ordering and comparing the use of formulas from one song to another. In order to visualize the corpus for formulaic analysis, I needed to see each formula in all its variations, in all its positions, in its many verse contexts, in all two thousand songs.⁴

At first I attempted to accomplish this task manually. I began sorting out the different formulas, as I recognized them, assigning a separate sheet of paper to each formula, and typing out the variants of the formula on the appropriate sheet as I came across them. After three months of work, I had read through only two hundred song texts and had already accumulated seven loose-leaf binders, full of thousands of sheets of paper. With each new formula that I came across, my search through these reams of

⁴ I have previously discussed this problem in two papers: "One Use of the Computer in the Analysis of Blues Lyrics," read at the Annual Meeting of the American Folklore Society, New Orleans, 23 October 1975; and "The Use of the Computer to Facilitate the Structural Analysis of Afro-American Blues Lyrics," read at the Colloque France-Canada III, Québec City, August 1977.

paper became more and more arduous.

My task seemed endless. The cost of paper alone was enough to discourage further analysis. I could also see some conceptual drawbacks to my system. In order to assign formulas to separate sheets of paper, I had to know beforehand what the syntactic, semantic, and lexical boundaries of the formula were. This was the reverse of what I was actually trying to accomplish, since I had hoped that the results of my analysis would lead to a better understanding of formula boundaries. In separating phrases onto different sheets of paper, I was automatically taking a certain analytical stand, and making quite artificial distinctions between phrases which were seemingly on the same continuum of meaning. I was, in essence, pre-judging the material, which would do nothing but skew the final results of my analysis.

What I needed was a way to re-order the blues lyrics without some preconceived classification already in mind. Only then could I visualize the material objectively, rather than intuitively. The answer, of course, was to use a computer to sort out the material. Like most students of the humanities and the social sciences, I knew the computer existed, but I had no idea how it could be utilized. In fact, I held the traditional prejudices against the computer that it dehumanized the material one worked with, and that it separated or distanced one from the material. But without a computer, I did not believe that the study would ever be completed.

I was very fortunate to meet Michael J. Preston, the humanities liaison-man for computers at the University of Colorado. He took one look at my problem and suggested a computer programme which would give me the kind of objective re-ordering of lyrics I needed. It was a key-word-in-context concordance programme--the kind of computer programme which has

After all the blues lines had been key-punched, the cards containing the corpus were fed into the computer and a sequence of programmes occurred which eventually resulted in a print-out. The first programme was CONVERT, which converted the information on the cards into a continuous stream of text, eliminating any information on the card, such as the song-code, which was not an actual part of the text. Then the CONCORD programme began, which took this stream of text and re-ordered it into a concordance form. This programme was followed by KWICIN, which took each concordized word and extended the context in which the word was found, both previous to and proceeding from the word under analysis. Finally, the programme KWICOUT occurred, which centred the concordized word in the middle of the print-out page and which generally organized the final format of the data. This was done for every word in the 2,120 texts. All the programmes were in the FORTRAN computer language.⁶ Although the cards were punched at Memorial University of Newfoundland, the programme was run on a CDC 6400 computer at the University of Colorado.⁷

The final print-out consisted of two large concordances and one smaller one (the programme can only take one thousand songs at a time), totaling over five thousand pages of information. On the following page is a sample of the concordance of the first thousand songs in the corpus. It is a partial list of the incidences of the word woke. Reading from left to right, the following information is given:

⁶ For a more detailed description of this sequence of programmes, see Michael J. Preston, "A Complete Concordance to the Non-Dramatic Poetry of Ben Jonson," Diss. Univ. of Colorado, 1975, pp. v-xxv.

⁷ For more specifications, see "Directory of Scholars Active: L671. The Lyrics of Race Record Blues, 1920-1942," Computers and the Humanities, 9 (1975), 189.

[illegible][illegible]

21	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100	
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1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	8														

[illegible]

Occurrences of the word woke in the first 1000 lyrics.

1. the song code
2. the line in the song
3. the word under analysis.

Note that the word being analyzed, woke, appears in the middle of the page, so that the context in which the word is found is evenly divided between what preceded and what follows the word. The listing is in alphabetical order from the word under analysis forward. At the end of the listing, the computer prints out the number of occurrences of the word; in this case, woke appears sixty-five times in the first one thousand songs of the corpus.

Certain symbols appear on the print-out which need explanation:

- = The equals sign signals the end of a line.
- † The arrow signals the end of a song.
- * The asterisk, besides enclosing hypothetical transcriptions, acts as an apostrophe.
- / The diagonal has previously been explained.

XXX This symbol replaces ??? for indecipherable words and phrases.

These symbols are not only cues for the computer programmes, but they also help the analyst to visualize the material on the print-out.

With such a concordance, I could approach the formulaic analysis in a more objective fashion. I could look up any number of related words or phrases and see how they compare semantically or syntactically. Given any phrase in the blues, I could explore the entire continuum of meaning in which it occurs, simply by looking up all possible lexical variations on that phrase in the print-out.

The computer, then, did not do the analysis for me. It simply re-ordered the blues texts in such a way that I could more easily visualize

and discover formulaic patterns. For example, the section of the print-out reproduced here clearly shows a formula which might be called "I woke up this morning." The computerized concordance programme has obvious implications for formulaic scholarship. Not only does it make one's analysis more objective, but it allows one to work with huge amounts of material, which could never be adequately analyzed using manual procedures. Because one can use a very large corpus, there is less of a chance that the results will be unduly affected by individual anomalies in the corpus. The computer, as a tool in formulaic analysis, is both a time-saver and an equalizer of information.⁸

⁸ The only other major study of which I am aware, which combines a computerized concordance programme with formulaic analysis is Joseph J. Duggan, *The Song of Roland: Formulaic Style and Poetic Craft*, Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies Publications, No. 6 (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1973).

PART ONE: AN OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF THE BLUES

I DEFINING THE BLUES: AN INTRODUCTION

The beginning of any structural analysis must be some definition of the corpus which is to be analyzed. It is not enough to say that one is to do a structural analysis of proverbs, folktales, or whatever, since genres tend to be rather fluid and the words we use to describe them are only hazy indications of the cultural phenomena they represent. Whether articulated or not, the analyst has certain a priori criteria by which he includes or excludes material from the corpus he wishes to study.

There is a danger, however, in defining a genre of folklore strictly by analyzing its structure. Alan Dundes and Robert A. Georges, in their structural study of the riddle, state from the outset: "An immediate aim of structural analysis in folklore is to define the genres of folklore."¹ They go on to give all the conventional definitions of the genre and conclude the introduction to their study with the following:

It is clear, then, that there is a need for a definition for the riddle which will be broad enough to include traditional texts such as the ones cited above which apparently fall outside Taylor's definition of the true riddle. At the same time, the definition should be narrow enough to exclude other materials whose morphological characteristics indicate that they are specimens of another genre. (p. 113)

This statement, however, is a tautology. What is says, in essence, is that a definition should include those things which fall within the definition and exclude those things which do not fall within the definition.

Dundes and Georges go on to give a fairly adequate structural analysis of riddles, but their definition of what a riddle is has actually been derived a priori, in an intuitive fashion, despite their theoretical

¹ "Toward a Structural Definition of the Riddle," Journal of American Folklore, 76 (1963), 111.

stance. Their corpus seems to be made up of those texts which conform to the categories they are formulating. At some point early in their analysis, they must have automatically eliminated such items of folklore as ballads, Marchen, calendar customs, and peat-spades, but how they arrived at the corpus under analysis is not made clear.

Despite Dundes' stated theoretical position in "From Etic to Emic Units in the Structural Study of Folktales,"² his approach to the structure of the riddle is still basically an etic one; instead of dealing with riddles as a part of a larger whole, he and Georges have abstracted a group which they instinctively see as "riddles" from the larger context of modes of cultural expression. There is really no way out of their dilemma. Part of their problem is that the stated "aim" of their analysis is to define the genre. Dan Ben-Amos has rightly stated that given such an aim, structural analysis becomes no more than "a chess-game" one plays with oneself.³

The aim of structural analysis is not to define the genre, any more than any other analysis has this aim. It is simply one way of studying what is perceived by the analyst to be a "genre" or a group of folklore items with certain similarities of form. A structural analysis, hopefully, will shed some light on the nature of the conscious or unconscious techniques of composition which the performer employs in creating a particular item of folklore. There is, however, no way of getting around the intuitive, "unscientific" selection of a corpus of folklore items to include in one's analysis.

² Journal of American Folklore, 75 (1962), 95-105.

³ "The Concepts of Genre in Folklore," read at the VI Congress of the Society for Folk Narrative Research, Helsinki, June 1974. See also his "Analytic Categories and Ethnic Genres," Genre, 2 (1969), 275-301.

The only way of dealing with this stumbling-block is to create some sort of operation definition which will automatically include or exclude items from the corpus to be analyzed. This method of arbitrary sorting of items along basically artificial criteria was first put forward as a methodology by Francis Lee Utley,⁴ but the method had been used instinctively, or tacitly, by virtually all scholars of folklore who have ever attempted to study specific "genres," or "types," or other categorized bits of folklore.

Vladimir Propp formulated a clear and simple operational definition in his pioneering work on the structure of the *Marchen*:

Let us first of all attempt to formulate our task. As already stated in the foreword, this work is dedicated to the study of fairy tales. The existence of fairy tales as a special class is assumed as an essential working hypothesis. By "fairy tales" are meant at present those tales classified by Aarne under numbers 300 to 749.⁵

Propp clearly understands that his operational definition is highly artificial and arbitrary, and we may quite justly fault his choice of criteria, but it is a "working hypothesis" which allows him to carry on with his study. Other structuralists have similar operational definitions, but few outline them as clearly as does Propp. The delimitations of their corpora are assumed to be intuitively obvious to other scholars in the field, and for the most part their assumptions are correct.

⁴ "Folk Literature: An Operational Definition," Journal of American Folklore, 74 (1961); rpt. in The Study of Folklore, ed. Alan Dundes (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1965), pp. 7-24.

⁵ Morphology of the Folktale, ed. Louis A. Wagner, trans. Laurence Scott, 2nd rev. ed., American Folklore Society Bibliographic and Special Series, Vol. 9, Indiana Univ. Research Center in Anthropology, Folklore, and Linguistics, Publ. 10 (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1968 [originally published in Russian in 1928]), p. 19.

22
The first task, then, of this structural study is to formulate some sort of operational definition. In the case of the blues, there is no handy type-index which clearly delimits the field. The very word blues, in referring to a type of song, is so amorphous that it has very little meaning in itself. Jazzmen continually use it to describe various instrumental forms of music (often twelve or sixteen-bar tunes); pop song composers and singers use the term for certain sad songs; and folksong revival performers and rock musicians also employ the term to describe many different kinds of song.

The term may even be used to denote sadness or despondancy in a non-musical context, but with some intuitive song form in mind. Note the following real estate advertisement:

New Listing
Avondale, N.B.

This house is the answer to "New House Price Blues."⁶

This mock-song title implies a certain knowledge of what a blues song might be, but the picture in the mind of the reader of this advertisement will vary greatly depending upon his background or musical expertise.

The widespread use of the term "blues" creates several problems for the researcher who has in mind the type of song sung by race record artists. For example, the book by Albert Murray, The Hero and the Blues,⁷ would appear to be an interesting approach to the lyrical analysis of the form of song under analysis here, but it turns out that he uses the term to describe instrumental jazz performances. His statement that Duke Ellington is the "most masterful of all blues idiom arranger-composers" (p. 84) clearly shows that his operational definition of the blues is quite different

⁶ Woodstock Bugle (New Brunswick), 25 Sept. 1974, p. 7.

⁷ The Hero and the Blues, The Paul Anthony Brick Lectures, 9th Series (Columbia?: Univ. of Missouri Press, 1973).

from the one to be proposed here.

What then is to be the operational definition of the blues which will determine the corpus of songs to be analyzed? Alan Dundes has identified the three essential ingredients in defining items of folklore: texture, text, and context.⁸ These three concepts must be applied to the blues in order to determine the delimitations of the corpus.

Dundes states that texture is "basically the study of language" (p. 255), but for the purposes of this analysis, this concept must be broadened. The texture of the blues is not so much its language as the more restrictive superstructure into which the language of the song must be placed; it is language within the constraints of stanza and line patterns, of rhyme scheme, and of the prosody of the song form in general. The texture also includes the musical and metrical superstructure into which the lyrics are placed, but, as will be pointed out, this aspect of texture is of less importance to this study than that of prosody.

It is interesting that Dundes spends several pages discussing texture and context in his article, but devotes only one paragraph to the discussion of text. Perhaps this is indicative of the modern view that the textual study of folklore items is unfashionable. D. K. Wilgus rightly sees this trend as detrimental to the study of folklore.⁹ For the purposes of this study, a definition of the text of the blues is essential. We may define text as the delimitations of the thematic material found in blues songs, as well as the presence or absence of plot or sequence in which this thematic material is placed. All forms of folklore mirror the culture

⁸ "Texture, Text, and Context," Southern Folklore Quarterly, 28 (1964), 251-65.

⁹ "The Text Is the Thing," Journal of American Folklore, 86 (1973), 241-52.

in which they are found, but none mirrors the entire culture.¹⁰ A study of the text of the blues will determine what part and how much of black culture is reflected in the lyrics.

By far the most complex aspect of this three-part definition is that of context. Dundes defines context as "the specific social situation in which that particular item [of folklore] is employed,"¹¹ but "specific social situation" is itself open to endless interpretation. When dealing with one item of folklore or one folklore event, the context may be rather obvious and straight-forward; but when looking at a large body of folklore, indeed an entire genre, a contextual definition becomes increasingly complicated.

Close to forty years ago, George Herzog urged that folksongs be studied within their contexts,¹² and in recent years the call for contextual studies, not only in folksong but in folklore in general, has arisen once more.¹³ But these studies have been concerned with the proper contextual observation and description of specific events. Context has not been used as a basic defining criterion for a genre of folklore as a whole.

¹⁰ For a recent study of folk music as a "mirror" of culture, see Roger Elbourne, "A Mirror of Man? Traditional Music as a Reflection of Society," Journal of American Folklore, 89 (1976), 463-68.

¹¹ "Texture, Text, and Context," pp. 255-56.

¹² "The Study of Folksong in America," Southern Folklore Quarterly, 2 (1938), 59-64.

¹³ See especially, Dan Ben-Amos, "Toward a Definition of Folklore in Context," Journal of American Folklore, 84 (1971), 3-15; Dan Ben-Amos and Kenneth S. Goldstein, "Introduction," in Folklore: Performance and Communication, ed. Dan Ben-Amos and Kenneth S. Goldstein (The Hague: Mouton, 1975), pp. 1-7; Dundes, "Texture, Text, and Context," pp. 251-65; and Robert A. Georges, "Toward an Understanding of Storytelling Events," Journal of American Folklore, 82 (1969), 313-28.

The contextual definition of a genre of folklore actually involves many separate definitions, since there are many different kinds of contexts. The blues as a type of folksong can be placed in at least five different contexts simultaneously: historical context, geographical context, culture context, performance context, and performer context. These different aspects of context correspond in some ways to the when, where, why, how and who of the blues.

The title of this study, of course, automatically delimits some of these contexts. The years 1920 to 1942 tell the historical context and the term "race record" gives the performance context. A true understanding, however, of how the blues is defined in this study involves a much deeper description of the contexts of the blues. The title isolates only a twenty-year span within the entire historical context of the blues and therefore gives an incomplete picture of this contextual aspect. The blues as a song form has been viewed by both the scholar and the singer as encompassing a much greater period of time. Similarly, the geographical context of the blues extends well beyond the recording room of the race record company.

The cultural context involves an understanding of the life-style of the people who sang and listened to the blues. This includes their economic and social conditions, their customs and traditions, and their contacts and relationships with neighboring, or dominant, cultures. For the purposes of this study, this context can only be touched upon.

The immediate context of the performance of the blues is, in this day, the most fashionable context to study, and indeed it is very important to the understanding of what the blues is. Again, the description of this context must go beyond what the title of this study states. The blues

must be defined in terms of the many different performance contexts in which it was found. Only then can one get the proper perspective on the context of the recorded performance, which is central to this thesis.

Once the general performance context of the blues has been described, the specific context of performing in a recording studio must be carefully detailed. In addition, the effects of these various performance contexts on the song, as well as the influence of the recording context on other performances and performers, must be discussed. Associated very closely with the performance context is the performer context. A definition of the blues must determine who performed such songs within the culture; how they were perceived and how they perceived themselves within the culture; and what role they played in the everyday life of their communities.

An operational definition of the blues which includes a detailed delineation of the texture, text, and context of this song form cannot be given in a page or a chapter. But without such a detailed description and definition of the blues, there is no way of determining what intuitive criteria the analyst has used in selecting songs for his structural study.

II THE TEXTURE AND TEXT OF THE BLUES

The most obvious and identifiable feature of a fixed form, such as the blues is its texture. The use of rhyme, consistent patterns and repetitions, and the structure of the stanzas and lines are the clearest markers which identify the blues as a form of song different from other songs. Indeed, it is the gross textural characteristics which have been used by scholars to define the blues as a genre. As Charles Keil points out, "the analyst is usually well advised to concentrate on form, structural regularities, syntactic rules. Indeed, blues and non-blues can easily be distinguished in these terms."¹

This emphasis on the textural characteristics of the blues is partly due to the generally-held opinion that the lyrics, rather than the music, are the basis of the definition of the blues. Singer Rubin Lacy said, "the blues is sung not for the tune. It's sung for the words mostly. A real blues singer sings a blues for the words."² In more technical language, scholar John F. Szwed makes the same point: "Thus, there is greater concern for textual message and meaning: the blues are information-oriented."³

It is not the entire blues lyric, however, which defines the texture of the form, but the stanza.⁴ The stanza has long been considered the

¹ Urban Blues (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1966), p. 51.

² David Evans, "The Rev. Rubin Lacy--Part 4," Blues Unlimited, No. 43 (May 1967), p. 13.

³ "Afro-American Musical Adaptation," in Afro-American Anthropology: Contemporary Perspectives, ed. Norman E. Whitten, Jr. and John F. Szwed (New York: The Free Press, and London: Collier-Macmillan, 1970), p. 222.

⁴ The term "stanza" will be employed throughout this study, rather than the more vague term "verse," which some scholars have chosen to use.

basic unit of text and texture by blues scholars. As early as 1928, Newman I. White wrote, "the stanza, and not the song, is the only true unit" in the blues,⁵ and since that time, others have also made this point. Stanley Edgar Hyman stated that in "the folk blues, the formal unit is not the song but the individual stanza"⁶; William Ferris has similarly pointed out that in "the blues tradition, however, the verse is the only textual unit which remains structurally intact, and any relevant study of the blues must focus its attention on the verse as the basic unit."⁷ Samuel B. Charters has also written that the stanza is the "place to start" in studying the blues.⁸

Just as there is general agreement that the stanza is the basic textual unit of the blues, most scholars are in accord as to the structure of this stanza. Abbe Niles may well have been the first to set down the basic structure of the blues stanza:

The thought would not necessarily be expressed in a single line, twice repeated without variation. There might be and usually was one repetition, but instead, the second line would slightly modify, by way of emphasis, the first, while the third would introduce something new.⁹

⁵ "The White Man in the Woodpile: Some Influences on Negro Secular Folk-Songs," American Speech, 4 (1928-29), 207.

⁶ "Negro Literature and Folk Tradition," Partisan Review, (1958), rpt. in The Promised End: Essays and Reviews 1942-1962, by Stanley E. Hyman (Cleveland and New York: The World Publishing Co., 1963), p. 306.

⁷ Blues From the Delta (London: Studio Vista, 1970), p. 34.

⁸ "An Introduction," in Country Blues Songbook, by Stefan Grossman, Stephan Calt and Hal Grossman (New York: Oak Publications, 1973), p. 4.

⁹ "Introduction," in Blues: An Anthology, by W. C. Handy (New York: Albert & Charles Boni, 1926), p. 2.

Two years later, Newman I. White gave a slightly more precise definition, when he wrote, "typically they consisted of either one line sung three times or a line sung twice (either with or without a modification of the second line), and an entirely different third line."¹⁰

The definition of a blues stanza as three lines, the first two of which are identical or nearly so, has been given by a number of scholars since the twenties,¹¹ but other writers have expanded this definition to include the stanza's metrical characteristics. For the most part, this means that the blues stanza is seen in terms of twelve bars of music with each of the three lines occupying four of the twelve bars.¹²

A further expansion of the textural definition of the blues includes the criterion that the three lines of the stanza must rhyme with each other. Bluesman Leonard "Baby Doo" Caston includes rhyme along with three lines and twelve bars as his criteria for blues texture:

In the blues they'd be making these recordings, you're playing the twelve-bar blues, you have to do these things in order for maybe whomsoever listen to this particular thing wouldn't hear it the first thing you said. So you would repeat it so you make sure you get the first thing. And so they would add the rhyming thing at the

¹⁰ American Negro Folk-Songs (1928; rpt. Hatboro, Pa.: Folklore Associates, 1965), pp. 387-88.

¹¹ See, for example, Russell Ames, The Story of American Folk Song (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1955), pp. 253-54; Harold Courlander, Negro Folk Music, U.S.A. (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1963), p. 126; and Alain Locke, The Negro and His Music, Bronze Booklet, No. 2 (1936; rpt. New York: Arno Press and The New York Times, 1969), p. 32.

¹² Among those who have defined the blues in this manner are Rudi Blesh, Shining Trumpets: A History of Jazz, 2nd rev. ed. (New York: Knopf, 1958), p. 103; Theresa C. Blakeley, "Blues," in Funk & Wagnall's Standard Dictionary of Folklore Mythology and Legend, ed. Maria Leach, I (New York: Funk & Wagnall, 1949); Gilbert Chase, America's Music: From Pilgrims to the Present (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1955), p. 452; LeRoi Jones, Blues People: Negro Music in White America (New York: William Morrow, 1963), p. 68; and Harry Oster, Living Country Blues (Detroit: Folklore Associates, 1969), p. 22.

end. So this would make you do your first line two times and your rhyme would come after. Well this got to be a thing where people listening would expect that; so they still do. So in order to get things across they would do it.¹³

Of course, many scholars share Caston's criteria,¹⁴ but Caston makes the important point that these are not merely academic criteria but folk criteria as well. The blues audience, according to Caston, expects the singer's song to meet certain textural demands, and the performer does his best to fulfill these criteria.

It would seem that this is a rare instance in which folk and scholarly morphologies are in accord.¹⁵ Indeed, the texture of the blues seems so obvious that most scholars have not bothered to describe it fully in their writings. This is probably what accounts for the differences in textural definition given above; most of the scholars cited would agree that the blues stanza is a three-line, twelve-bar, rhymed form, but only a few have gone to the trouble of clearly stating these criteria. Is there any doubt that Harold Courlander or Alain Locke would include rhyme in their textural definitions? They merely did not state the obvious. The following textural definition by Avril Dankworth sums up the points made above, and

¹³ Jeff Titon, ed., From Blues to Pop: The Autobiography of Leonard "Baby Doo" Caston, JEMF Special Series, No. 4 (Los Angeles: John Edwards Memorial Foundation, 1974), p. 24.

¹⁴ See, for example, Sterling A. Brown, "The Blues," Phylon, 13 (1953), 287; Bruce Cook, Listen to the Blues (New York: Scribner's, 1973), p. 24; Peter Guralnick, Feel Like Going Home: Portraits in Blues & Rock'n'Roll (New York: Outerbridge & Dienstfrey, 1971), p. 22; Keil, p. 51; Brian Rust, record notes to Swaggle S-1240; and Jeff Titon, Early Down Home Blues: A Musical and Cultural Analysis (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, forthcoming).

¹⁵ The eliciting of folk taxonomies has become an interesting and profitable research technique. The basic handbook for this type of study is James P. Spradley and David W. McCurdy, The Cultural Experience: Ethnography in Complex Society (Chicago: Science Research Associates, 1972).

would probably be in agreement with the views of those writers who have not bothered to state the obvious:

The words of the blues are simple rhyming couplets in iambic pentameters, the first line being repeated (either exactly or with slight variation) before the second is stated, thus making three lines in all. Each line of the poem takes four bars of music, hence the term "twelve-bar blues".¹⁶

The general agreement on the texture of the blues stanza has led to the stanzaic designation "AAB" to be used by most scholars. There are some problems, however, with referring to the blues stanza as AAB. Although this designation clearly shows that the stanza is made up of one line repeated twice followed by a third line, it gives an entirely wrong impression of the blues stanza's rhyme-scheme. A scholar unfamiliar with the blues would take AAB to mean that the first two lines of the stanza rhymed with each other, while the third did not, since letter designations in prosody indicate rhyme-schemes.

Lauri Forti was perhaps the first to recognize the ambiguity of the AAB designation, and suggested that the blues stanza be represented by "AAa" instead.¹⁷ Several others, however, both before and since Forti, have used alternative stanza representations. John W. Work preferred "ABC" which merely showed that there were three lines in the stanza.¹⁸

¹⁶ Jazz: An Introduction to Its Musical Basis (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1968), p. 47. For an even more exacting, but less concise, definition of blues texture, see A. X. Nicholas, Woke Up This Mornin': Poetry of the Blues (Toronto: Bantam Books, 1973), p. 1.

¹⁷ "Robert Pete Williams 'Louisiana Blues' Takoma B 1011," record review, Boston Broadside, rpt. in Blues Unlimited, No. 52 (April 1968), p. 11.

¹⁸ American Negro Songs and Spirituals (New York: Bonanza Books, 1940), p. 33.

Richard Middleton used "aa'b" to indicate that the stanza contained a repeated line.¹⁹ A. X. Nicholas' designation, "A²B," (p. 1) and Charles Roxin's "AA'B"²⁰ are no different from Middleton's in the information they impart. Rod Gruver's designation, "A²A," which manages to indicate both the rhyme-scheme and the repeated-line pattern of the stanza is probably the most logical representation of blues stanza texture.²¹ This study shall make use of Gruver's stanza representation.

Except for the fact that the blues line is composed of four bars, scholars have had less to say about the texture of the line than of the stanza. Several writers, however, have recognized that the blues line, itself, is divided into two parts, separated by a caesura. In discussing a blues-like work song, Howard W. Odum and Guy B. Johnson describe this caesura:

Many of these exclamations in time become connected, and make more distinct songs. The songs that are given in couplets are of this type. Each couplet represents, as a rule, four parts, each line two divisions, each division a single phrase like those just given. The process is a natural one.²²

A small number of scholars have discussed the blues caesura, although they may call it a pause, break, or simply a division in the line.²³ One writer, Janheinz Jahn, prefers to think of the blues stanza in terms

¹⁹ Pop Music and the Blues: A Study of the Relationship and Its Significance (London: Victor Gollancz, 1972), p. 33.

²⁰ Aspects of the Blues ([Fairport, N.Y.: Space Age Printers, 1973]), pp. 9-10.

²¹ "The Origin of the Blues," Blues World, No. 43 (Summer 1972), p. 9.

²² The Negro and His Songs (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina, 1925), p. 267.

²³ Among those who have recognized the caesura are Gruver, "Origin of the Blues," p. 8; Don Kent, record notes to RCA LPV-577; and Nicholas, -- p. 1.

of six lines because of its consistent employment of the caesura.²⁴

Only two writers, however, have actually explored the placement and nature of this caesura. Milton Metfessel, in his work, Phonophotography in Folk Music (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1928), scientifically measured the durations of caesuras in various songs sung by blacks. For example, in the blues, "You Don't Know My Mind," Metfessel recorded the following caesuras (inserted), measured in hundredths of a second:

Take me back daddy [.62] try me one mo' time [.47]
Ef I doan do to suit you [.29] I'll break my back-bone tryin' (pp. 109-10)

Notice that the only vocal breaks in the singing occur at approximately mid-line and at the end of the first line in this stanza. Jeff Titon has explored the caesura from a musical point of view and found that it may take three forms:

In virtually every down home blues song transcribed the first (and second) lines of each stanza were divided into two distinct parts. This division was accomplished melodically in one of three different ways: by a rest . . . by an end pitch held and emphasized longer than the duration of a quarter note . . . or by an intervallic skip, usually upward, of at least a minor third . . . The third line of each stanza was similarly divided into two parts in most, but not all, cases.²⁵

Whichever of these forms the caesura takes, it is quite noticeable to the listener, and like the A^2A structure of the stanza, it is an expected part of the performance of the blues.

There is a danger, however, in accepting the criteria outlined above in defining blues texture. Although they hold for most examples of blues songs, there are so many exceptions to the A^2A , twelve-bar stanzaic form that a more flexible textural definition must be found which will include

²⁴ A History of Neo-African Literature, trans. Oliver Coburn and Ursula Lehrburger (London: Faber and Faber, 1968), p. 166.

²⁵ Early Down Home Blues.

these exceptions as blues songs. Perhaps the least constant criterion is the twelve-bar nature of the stanza. Odum and Johnson were probably the first to point out that the blues is capable of great metric variability,²⁶ and nearly all writers who have discussed blues texture since then have agreed that, although most blues stanzas are composed of twelve bars, stanzas of eight, eleven, sixteen, twenty-four, or theoretically any number of bars is also possible.

The number of bars in a stanza does not correspond, in any way, to the number of vocal syllables a singer uses in his stanza. One seems quite unaffected by the other. The reason for this, as Jean Wagner has pointed out, is that "a more or less indefinite number of unaccented syllables can be put between the stresses, which make a blues verse quite lengthy, so that it can be presented typographically in two lines of equal or unequal length."²⁷ Bearing this in mind, the metrical criterion seems to be rather superfluous to any definition of the verbal texture of the blues. Roxin goes so far as to say that the "time of each verse is built not by seconds, but by the repeating cadences and sung lines. A song is not three minutes long, but five verses long; a verse is not fifteen seconds, but three lines long." (pp. 10-11)

The A² criterion is not so easily dispensed with. That the lines of the stanza should rhyme is fairly well accepted by the singers and their audience.²⁸ The number of repetitions of the lines in the stanza,

²⁶ The Negro and His Songs, p. 291.

²⁷ Les poètes nègres des Etats-Unis, as translated in Jahn, p. 167.

²⁸ Some of the properties of blues rhyme will be discussed in Chapter XIV, and a more detailed analysis of blues rhyme may be found in Michael Taft, "Willie McTell's Rules of Rhyme: A Brief Excursion Into Blues Phonetics," Southern Folklore Quarterly, forthcoming.

however, may vary considerably, and A²A is only one of many stanza forms acceptable to blues performers and their audiences. The textural definition of the blues stanza, therefore, should be broadened to include any number of variations upon the basic rhymed couplet, represented by AA.

Harry Oster recognized the basic couplet as the common textural feature of all blues in this description of the blues stanza:

In making use of such clever, richly evocative figures of speech, blues singers rely heavily on conventions of rhetorical structure. In both talking blues and blues which are more rigid in structure most lines are made up of two sections of approximately equal duration with a caesura (a pause) in between, more or less in the middle. Often there is a striking contrast between the first half of a line and the second half, and/or between the opening line of a verse and the last line. The results of these elements in combination is a quotable verse, complete in itself, often aphoristic, rhythmically appealing as the words trip easily off the tongue and readily remembered--roughly analogous to the heroic couplet of the eighteenth century, if we disregard the repetition of a line in the blues.

True wit is nature to advantage dressed,

What oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed.

The final line completes the thought initiated by the first, in a way which is clever, witty, dramatic, or strikingly imaginative.²⁹

His description may be a bit overblown, but the analogy of the blues stanza with the heroic couplet is a good one. His thoughts on the contrasts between half-lines and between lines will be discussed in a later chapter.

What are some of the variations upon this basic couplet? The most common type of variation is in the number of repetitions of either the first, last, or both lines of the stanza. As already mentioned, the A²A variation is the most common:

²⁹ Living Country Blues, p. 70.

1. I'm flying to South Carolina; I got to go there this time
 I'm flying to South Carolina; I got to go there this time
 Women in Dallas Texas is about to make me lose my mind
 (JEFB-67)

But the often-bellished AA blues stanza is also quite frequent, as in this example:

2. Good Lord Good Lord send me an angel down
 Can't spare you no angel; will spare you a teasing brown
 (McTW-33)

The first line of the blues couplet is most commonly repeated and the singer sometimes even uses an A³A form:

3. If you want a good woman, get one long and tall
 If you want a good woman, get one long and tall
 If you want a good woman, get one long and tall
 When she go to loving, she make a panther squawl (BARN-2)

But the second line of the couplet was also capable of being repeated, as in this A² form:

4. I tell you girls, and I'm going to tell you now
 If you don't want me, please don't dog me around
 If you don't want me, please don't dog me around (WILK-4)

The singer could also repeat both lines in an A²A² structure, but, more commonly, he would repeat the entire couplet twice, as in the following (AA)² stanza:

5. Well I solemnly swear; Lord I raise my right hand
 That I'm going to get me a woman; you get you another man
 I solemnly swear; Lord I raise my right hand
 That I'm going to get me a woman babe; you get you another man
 (HOUS-2)

Theoretically, any combination of these forms could occur in the blues, so that A⁴A, A²A³, AA³, (AA)³, (A²A)², and other such structures are possible if not probable. Perhaps the strangest, and rarest, form of line repetition in the corpus under analysis is AAA, as in the following example:

6. I got something to tell you just before I go
 It ain't nothing baby; turn your lamp down low
 I got something to tell you just before I go (VIRG-1)

Not all stanzaic variations involve repetition. It was quite common for the blues singer to add a refrain to the AA couplet. This refrain could vary from a short tag-line to a multi-lined structure in itself, but its structure does not have to conform in any way to the textural constraints of the blues couplet. Note the following examples:

- 7 You say you done quit me; now what should I do
 Can't make up my mind to love no one but you
 (refrain):
 I don't like that
 No I don't
 I don't like that
 No I don't
 You know it kill me dead
 I don't like that (BARE-5)
- 8 Look here woman; making me mad
 Done bringing me something somebody done had
 (refrain):
 Carry it right back home; I don't want it no more (BELE-5)

The structure of both examples 7 and 8 may be represented as AAR, and this is the most common type of refrain variation.

Repetition of lines may, however, be combined with a refrain, as in the following A²Ar structure:

- 9 I went down in the alley trying to sell my coal today
 I went down in the alley trying to sell my coal today
 And a woman run out and hollered; scared my mule away
 (refrain):
 She wanted to boodlie-bum-bum
 She hollered boodlie-bum-bum
 Oh boodlie-bum boodlie-bum boodlie-bum-bum (COVB-2)

Note that the refrain in the above example contains nonsense-type words similar to refrains in other song traditions.

The refrain, however, may also take the form of a blues couplet. Following the same rules of blues texture variation, the refrain may be either a simple blues couplet or a couplet involving repetition. The following two examples represent AAR(AA) and AAR(A²A) stanzaic forms, respectively:

10 Early one morning just about half past three
 You done something that's really worrying me
 (refrain):
 Come on; take a little walk with me
 Back to the same old place where we long to be (LOCK-2)

11 I got a gal; she got a Rolls Royce
 She didn't get it all by using her voice
 (refrain):
 I'm wild about my 'tuni; only thing I crave
 I'm wild about my 'tuni; only thing I crave
 Well sweet patun* going to carry me to my grave (BAKW-8)

Just as the refrain may manifest itself in a number of different forms which bear little or no relationship to the structure of the blues couplet, the couplet itself may become a refrain, chorus, or blues-like interjection in a basically non-blues song. This textural phenomenon most often occurs in the songs of the female vaudeville singers. The song may begin with a tin-pan alley, white, popular texture, perhaps an ABAB stanzaic form, but the singer would suddenly break into a different rhythm and sing one or two blues couplets, before going back to the normal structure of the song.

In the following song, sung by vaudeville singer, Trixie Smith, the first stanza exhibits a non-blues ABAB structure; the second stanza has an ABBA structure; and the third stanza, although it exhibits a blues-like AA structure, has no caesura in its lines. The third and fourth stanzas, however, are definitely blues couplets, with an AA structure and the proper mid-line caesura:

12 Now some folks long to have a-plenty money
 Some will want their wine and song
 But all I want is my sweet loving honey
 I cry about him all night long

Once I had a dear sweet daddy, but I didn't treat him right
 So he left town
 With Mandy Brown
 That is why I'm blue tonight

So I'm leaving here today
 When I find him he will say

Please come back and love me like you used to do; I think about
you every day
You reap just what you sow in the sweet bye and bye and be sorry
that you went away

Oh baby I'm crazy; almost dead
I wish I had you here to hold my aching head (SMIT-14)

In the above song, there is a definite instrumental and vocal break as Smith shifts into a blues texture. The last line of the third stanza, "When I find him he will say," also seems to act as an introduction to the blues stanzas which follow. This song is typical of the semi-blues songs which were recorded in the hundreds by the female vaudeville singers.

In addition to repetition, refrains, and "embedding" in non-blues songs, the singer could embellish his blues couplet with certain stylistic and vocal devices. Shouting, talking, or using a falsetto voice were some of the devices which singers employed, either in the entire blues couplet or in certain sections of it. One device which is similar to the repetition variations was what might be called "staggering." In this device, the singer would repeat parts of a line or half-line in an incremental fashion. Note the following example:

13 When you hear me walking, turn your lamp down, turn your lamp
down, lamp down low
When you hear me walking, turn your lamp down low
When you hear me walking, turn your lamp down low
And turn it so your man'll never know (GRAN-1)

Example 13 is an A³A blues stanza with staggering in the second half of its first line.

On rare occasions, the singer may sing only a partial blues stanza; that is, there would be no rhyming line to complete the stanza. These partial stanzas could take any number of forms, depending upon the repetitions and refrains which the singer wished to use: A, A², A³, Ar, A²r(AA), and so on. In theory, these partial stanzas should not be con-

sidered blues stanzas at all, but they generally occur within the context of a blues song, where other stanzas conform to the texture of the blues. In these contexts, the "incomplete" nature of these stanzas becomes implicit in the overall structure of the song.

This leads to a further observation about blues texture. Not only may a singer vary his stanzaic structure from song to song, but also from stanza to stanza within the same song. In the following song by Skip James, the structure of the stanzas is A^2 , A^2 , AA, AA^2 , respectively. Note also that staggering occurs in the last two stanzas:

14 I'd rather be the Devil, to be that woman's man
I'd rather be the Devil, to be that woman's man

Oh nothing but the Devil changed my baby's mind
Oh nothing but the Devil changed my baby's mind

I laid down last night, laid down last night, I laid down last
night; tried to take my rest
My mind got to rambling, like the wild geese from the west, from
the west

The woman I love, the woman I love, the woman I love Lord,
stole her from my best friend
But he got lucky; stole her back again
But he got lucky; stole her back again (JAMS-1)

The combinations and permutations possible within the confines of the simple blues couplet are endless. Add to this the possible combinations of stanzaic types within the same song, and the varieties inherent in the texture of the blues become truly astounding. The blues singer is, however, rather conservative. Many possible textural structures never appear in the corpus under analysis. This conservative tendency is especially clear when one considers that perhaps eighty percent of all blues songs follow the strict A^2A pattern. Although there was considerable room for creativity within the texture of the blues, the blues singer preferred to concentrate his creative efforts upon the inner structure of the

blues couplet, as we shall see.

In defining the text of the blues, the first question to be answered is whether the blues is a ballad or lyric song form. W. Edson Richmond has defined the lyric as a song which lacks "the conservative force of a specific narrative" but is "expressive of mood rather than a story."³⁰ The ballad, on the other hand, has been defined as "a narrative folk-song which dramatizes a memorable event."³¹ Of course, the distinction between these two song forms is not always clear, and, as Roger D. Abrahams and George Foss have pointed out, most songs fall on a continuum between "action oriented" and "emotion oriented" texts.³²

Although there are some narrative blues texts (to be discussed in Chapter XIV), the great majority of blues fall farther to the "emotion oriented" side of the continuum than perhaps any other North American song form. In almost all cases, the blues is entirely non-narrative and the lyrics follow no series of events nor any discernible chronology. Indeed, the blues text is contrary to most of the narrative laws established by Axel Olrik.³³ The blues begins and ends abruptly, without any noticeable build-up of tension or any climax as the song moves from

³⁰ "Just Sing It Yourself": The American Lyric Tradition," in Our Living Traditions: An Introduction to American Folklore, ed. Tristram P. Coffin (New York: Basic Books, 1968), p. 95.

³¹ G. Malcolm Laws, Jr., Native American Balladry: A Descriptive Study and a Bibliographical Syllabus, Publications of the American Folklore Society Bibliographic and Special Series, Vol. 1, rev. ed. (Philadelphia: American Folklore Society, 1964), p. 2.

³² Anglo-American Folksong Style (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1968), pp. 37-60.

³³ "Epic Laws of Folk Narrative," trans. Jeanne P. Steager, in The Study of Folklore, ed. Alan Dundes (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1965), pp. 129-41.

one stanza to the next; except for the most common textural stanza form, there is no "law of three" or any other consistent pattern of repetition in most blues. As there is rarely a "scene" as such described in the blues texts, it is difficult to apply Olrik's "law of two to a scene," though it is true that the situations described in the blues usually involve two persons. These two persons, however, are usually "lovers" in the broadest sense of the term, and do not contrast with each other in the radical way Olrik describes ("young and old, large and small, man and monster, good and evil" p. 135). Likewise, since the two persons are usually lovers, they by no means fulfill the role of "twins" as defined by Olrik.

The loose narrative nature of most blues texts makes Olrik's laws of "initial and final position," "single strand," "patterning," "tableau scenes," "logic of the Sage," and "unity of plot" unworkable. Perhaps the only law which the blues seems to follow to any extent is that of "concentration on a leading character," since the blues text is usually a first person account or a situation in which the persona is an active participant.

If the blues text is not a narrative, how can it be described? The blues text usually portrays some common situation in which human beings find themselves. Rarely is the text concerned with heroic acts, great historical events, or larger-than-life characters. In the words of Paul Oliver, "It would seem that the blues did not assume to any great degree the role of the ballad in reciting the details of events that had acquired heroic, significant or symbolic importance in the lives of Negroes."³⁴

³⁴ Aspects of the Blues Tradition (1968; rpt. New York: Oak Publications, 1970), p. 148.

In this sense, the blues is not concerned with a "memorable event" but with an event which is familiar in its substance to the black audience, an event with which the listener can easily identify.

Odum and Johnson recognized this aspect of black song in general when they wrote, "Little incidents of everyday life thus constitute an inexhaustible source of song" in black tradition.³⁵ Nestor R. Ortiz Oderigo, in specific reference to the blues, wrote, "Sus poesías glosan todas las peripecias y las dificultades de la vida cotidiana de los negros en las pequeñas comunidades del sur de los Estados Unidos, donde se los crea con mayor asiduidad."³⁶ The everyday life of the urban and northern black, however, is also described in blues texts.

The power of the blues text lies in its ability to speak to the problems of the common man. Bluesman J. D. Short makes this point: "What I think about that makes the blues really good is when a fellow writes a blues and then writes it with a feeling, with great harmony, and there's so many true words in the blues, of things that have happened to so many people, and that's why it makes the feeling in the blues."³⁷ Singers put a great emphasis on "truth" in the lyrics of the blues when they talk about the nature of blues texts, but they do not necessarily describe a specific true incident when they sing. The truth in the lyrics is a universal truth. David Evans wrote, "The main aesthetic criterion then for early folk blues was truth. But it was a truth based in universal human

³⁵ The Negro and His Songs, p. 152.

³⁶ Historia del Jazz (Buenos Aires: Ricordi Americana, 1952), p. 86.

³⁷ Samuel B. Charters, The Poetry of the Blues (New York: Oak Publications, 1963), p. 12.

experience or at least one that was relevant to singer and audience."³⁸

Since the blues is basically concerned with expressions of universal truth, the specific situation described in the lyrics need not be autobiographical. The blues singer observes his culture and personalizes the experiences of those around him. Szwed has pointed out that "as the blues are completely personalized (what Abrahams called the 'intrusive I'), there is an absence of the 'objectivity' so widely commented upon in ballad form."³⁹ But, at the same time, this lack of objectivity must not be confused with autobiography in the texts of the blues. The persona of the blues song must not be equated with the singer of that song.⁴⁰ Singer Rubin Lacy clearly makes this point:

Sometimes I'd propose as it happened to me in order to hit somebody else, 'cause everything that happened to one person has at some time or other happened to another one. If not, it will. You make the blues maybe hitting after someone else, and all the same time it's hitting you too. Some place it's gonna hit you.⁴¹

The non-autobiographical nature of the blues is even more explicitly stated by Pete Welding in discussing his interview with bluesman Robert Wilkins:

Wilkins asserted that one need not personally undergo the experience related in a blues song; the singer often can take as his song material occurrences that have befallen others, his friends and neighbors. Wilkins remarked in illustration that his recording of "Nashville

³⁸ "Folk, Commercial, and Folkloristic Aesthetics in the Blues," *Jazzforschung*, 5 (1973), 15.

³⁹ "Afro-American Musical Adaptation," p. 222.

⁴⁰ This distinction has been most adequately made by Rod Gruver, "The Blues as Dramatic Monologues," *JEMF Quarterly*, 6 (1970), pp. 28-31, and Jeff Titon, Early Down Home Blues.

⁴¹ David Evans, "Folk, Commercial, and Folkloristic Aesthetics in the Blues," p. 14.

"Stonewall Blues" was based in [sic] the experiences of a man for whom he had worked in Memphis and who had been sent to the penitentiary for bootlegging. He had told this story to Wilkins, who then constructed a blues about it.⁴²

Of course, the blues singer often personalizes the situations which he sings about to such an extent that, when being interviewed about the origins of a particular song, he may claim that the incidents in the song are from his own life. The singer, as an entertainer, wishes to convey a certain image to his audience--an image closer to the persona of his blues than to the performer himself. Tommy Johnson apparently had narrative explanations for his blues which were highly autobiographical, but these narratives were usually made up after the fact and didn't seem to reflect real events, or at least literally true statements about his life.⁴³

The predominant view is that the blues does not necessarily describe all aspects of everyday life, but only those things in life which are troublesome, unpleasant, or sad. Alain Locke's view is typical of most writers on the subject:

The dominant blues mood is a lament, beginning in a sentimental expression of grief or hard luck, sometimes ending on an intensification of the same mood and sometimes turned into ironical self-ridicule or fatalistic resignation.⁴⁴

Harold Courlander further states that the blues "is a genre utilized to express personal dissatisfaction, remorse, or regret; to tell the world about your misfortune and the way you feel about it; to air a scandal; and perhaps to point the finger of accusation at someone who has caused an injury or misery."⁴⁵

⁴² "Tapescripts: Interview with Rev. Robert Wilkins (T7-155)," JEMF Quarterly, 2, No. 3 (1967), 55.

⁴³ David Evans, Tommy Johnson (London: Studio Vista, 1971), pp. 48-53.

⁴⁴ The Negro and His Music, pp. 32-33.

⁴⁵ Negro Folk Music, U.S.A., p. 128.

These views are correct for the majority of blues songs, but there are also a good number of songs which are positive, and even joyous, in mood. The function of some blues texts is simply to encourage dancing and general lightheadedness, and their lyrics display none of the somberness described above. The following blues is one example:

15 Now look here girl; put on your best dress
We going to see who can do the boogie woogie the best

Now look over where them girls got them dresses of green
I swear to God this boogie too mean

Get a half pint of moonshine; two or three bottles of beer
I believe I'll pitch the boogie right here

Get all your moonshine; get all your beer
Close the door; ain't going to let nobody up here (EZEL-1)

Other blues songs describe troublesome situations in a humorous way, and thus are bittersweet in mood. It is best to say that blues texts may evoke a number of very different emotions in the listener through their lyrics, as they attempt to describe the everyday life of the black person in American culture.

The view, however, that the blues reflects the total black culture is probably a bit too strong. It is true that within the vast corpus of blues lyrics, most aspects of black society are described. Paul Oliver has written two books which attempt to describe black society through the lyrics of blues, and his work is entirely commendable.⁴⁶ But the overwhelming subject matter of blues texts is the different aspects of love and hate between man and woman. To define the blues as a "love-lyric" would not be an over-simplification.

Odum and Johnson, in speaking of male black singers, wrote that

⁴⁶ Aspects of the Blues Tradition; and The Meaning of the Blues (1960; rpt. New York: Collier Books, 1963).

women "hold first place" as thematic material,⁴⁷ and Courlander has stated, "Probably the most commonplace of all blues themes is 'the woman problem'--or, conversely, 'the man problem.' A singer complains of his woman's behaviour, of her disinterest, her lack of faithfulness, or desertion."⁴⁸ Again, the prevalent view is that the blues concerns itself with the sorrows, rather than the joys, of love: "the most broadly woven strand in the texture of the blues is the dispair of love."⁴⁹

But once more this view is too narrow. All aspects of love are the subject of the blues, although love's sorrows are the concern of the majority of blues lyrics. If the blues singer could articulate the general message of his songs, he would not speak in purely negative terms about love, but would point out the paradoxical bittersweet nature of love. Singer Henry Townsend said, "You know, that's the major thing in life. Please-believe me. What you love the best is what can hurt you the most."⁵⁰

Most singers, however, when they speak of love as a theme in the blues, speak neither positively nor negatively. Robert Pete Williams said quite simply, "Love makes the blues. That's where it comes from. There wouldn't be no love and there wouldn't be no blues if there was just men."⁵¹ Singer James "Son" Thomas similarly said, "It ain't very many blues made that ain't made up about a woman. It's a few ain't made up about a

⁴⁷ The Negro and His Songs, p. 160.

⁴⁸ Negro Folk Music, U.S.A., p. 130.

⁴⁹ Charters, Poetry of the Blues, p. 8.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁵¹ Cook, Listen to the Blues, p. 40.

woman, but most of them is 'my baby this' or 'my baby that'.⁵²

Even the minority of blues which are not primarily concerned with love may still touch on the subject during the course of the text.

Note the last verse of this blues which is primarily about the persona's love of drink:

I'd rather be sloppy drunk than anything I know
And another half a pint mama will see me go

I love my moonshine whiskey better than a filly loves her mare
You can take your pretty bucks; give me my cool kind can

I'd rather be sloppy drunk, sitting in the can
Than to be out in the streets, running from the man

Mmmmm bring me another two-bit pint
Because I got my habits on and I'm going to wreck this joint

My gal trying quit me for somebody else
Now I'm sloppy drunk mama; sleeping all by myself (CARRL-5)

The text of the blues, then, may be seen in terms of primary and secondary themes. Primarily, the blues is a love lyric which describes the many facets of the subject: seduction, jealousy, adultery, abandonment, and hate, as well as faithfulness, self-sacrifice, tenderness, and sexual satisfaction; sexual inexperience and impotence, as well as worldliness and potency. Secondly, the blues treats such common and everyday subjects as poverty, unemployment, whiskey, money, dancing, natural disasters, relationships between blacks and whites, imprisonment, sports, gambling, sickness, the blessings of country life, or, conversely, the benefits of the city, travelling, farming, mining, railroading; and other innumerable qualities of black life.

Swzed has written that the "blues singer is by no means a shaman, but

⁵² Bill Ferris, "Mississippi Country Bluesmen New Discoveries: Creativity in the Blues", Blues Unlimited, No. 71 (April 1970), p. 13.

he performs in many of the shaman's capacities. He presents difficult experiences for the group, and the effectiveness of his performance depends upon a mutual sharing of experience."⁵³ This is a fairly accurate observation, but Middleton's statement that the "bluesman can be seen as the memory and even conscience of the community, as well as its feelings and consciousness" is too strong.⁵⁴ The blues singer does not speak for the community, but only observes his surroundings and describes them in song. Most of his observations fall on the love lives of those around him, since this aspect of life is probably of more interest, universally, to his audience than other aspects. There is no consistent message in his lyrics about the "right" or "wrong" way to live, nor does he particularly protest the injustices of being a black in North America.

It is somewhat of a paradox, then, that although the singer personalizes the experiences of others in his song, his view of the world is fairly objective. He reports the emotional life of his community rather than his own particular emotional state. It is dangerous, therefore, to seek to know the singer through the persona of his song. There may be no connection between the two. This is not to say that singers never sing about themselves, or that their songs are never autobiographical. After all, John Hurt was rediscovered through the lyrics of his "Avalon Blues." But in most cases, one can never know to what extent the persona of a blues truly reflects the life and emotional state of the singer.

Likewise, the singer may not give a truly accurate picture of black

⁵³ "Afro-American Musical Adaptation," p. 223.

⁵⁴ Pop Music and the Blues, p. 17.

life, since he makes little distinction between what is important or unimportant in the community. He sings about what is striking or of interest to him, and this may change from song to song without reference to what is or is not important in black culture. The blues singer is not interested in portraying black life accurately. The researcher who wishes to learn about black culture from the texts of the blues must keep this fact in mind. Sterling A. Brown's analysis of blues texts makes this very point: "There are so many Blues that any preconception might be proved about Negro life, as well as its opposite."⁵⁵

We shall see, in a later chapter, that the structure, rather than the text, of the blues may reveal, in a much more profound way, aspects of black life and culture.

⁵⁵ "The Blues as Folk Poetry," in Folk-Say: A Regional Miscellany, ed. B. A. Botkin (1930; rpt. New York: Johnson Reprint Corp., 1970), p. 325.

III HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXTS OF THE BLUES

Placing the blues in its historical context requires at least two questions to be asked: from which older forms of creativity did the blues emerge, and when did this emergence take place? As will be pointed out, neither question can be answered very satisfactorily, since folk forms are almost never recognized or documented when they originate, but only after they have become well-established within their culture.

The controversy over whether the blues, and indeed all black music in the United States, had its origins in African or European creative forms has been one of the lesser "wars" in folksong scholarship for many years. D. K. Wilgus has surveyed the different factions in this battle in his book, Anglo-American Folksong Scholarship Since 1898, and has correctly concluded that Afro-American folksong is a blend of the traditions and forms of both continents.¹ The battle, however, goes on to this day among scholars.²

The question as to which specific form of black folklore was responsible for the emergence of the blues is no less a controversy among scholars. Stanley Edgar Hyman, in accordance with his general approach

¹ Anglo-American Folksong Scholarship Since 1898 (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1959), pp. 345-64.

² For the most recent arguments for and against African influence in the blues, see Paul Oliver, Savannah Syncopators: African Retentions in the Blues (London: Studio Vista, 1970), as well as the following series of articles in Living Blues: Lynn S. Summers, "African Influence and the Blues: An Interview with Richard A. Waterman," No. 6 (Autumn 1971), pp. 30-36; Paul Oliver, "Some Comments: African Influence and the Blues," No. 8 (Spring 1972), pp. 13-17; David Evans, "Africa and the Blues," No. 10 (Autumn 1972), pp. 27-29; and Paul Oliver, "Echoes of the Jungle?" No. 13 (Summer 1973), pp. 29-32.

to folklore, surmises that African rituals are the source of the blues,³ but he admits that he has not investigated this possibility. Rod Gruver believes that blues emerged from black folk dance,⁴ especially the "sukey jump" dances of the last century.

Most scholars, however, believe that the blues emerged from another, older folklyric form. Bruce Cook sees nineteenth century ballads as the major source for blues,⁵ whereas Miles Fisher and Alfons Dauer believe that the blues sprang from spirituals.⁶ Perhaps the preponderant point of view is that the blues is a direct outgrowth of the work song or field holler: David Evans, LeRoi Jones, Richard Middleton, and Harry Oster are among the members of this faction in the controversy.⁷

None of these theories, however, rests on incontrovertible evidence, but rather on speculative comparisons between different black folk forms and the blues. Paul Oliver's belief that the blues grew out of many different black song traditions is by far the most acceptable answer,⁸ con-

³ "The Ritual View of the Myth and the Mythic," Journal of American Folklore, 68 (1955), 470-71.

⁴ "The Origin of the Blues," Blues World, No. 43 (Summer 1972), pp. 6-9; and "Sex, Sound, Cows and the Blues," JEMF Quarterly, 7 (1971), 37-39.

⁵ Listen to the Blues (New York: Scribner's, 1973), pp. 59-60.

⁶ Negro Slave Songs in the United States (1953; rpt. New York: Russell & Russell, 1968), p. 188; and Der Jazz: Seine Ursprünge und Seine Entwicklung (Eisenach and Kassel: Erich Roth-Verlag, 1958), p. 70, respectively.

⁷ "Africa and the Blues," p. 29; Blues People: Negro Music in White America (New York: William Morrow, 1963), p. 18; Pop Music and the Blues: A Study of the Relationship and Its Significance (London: Victor Gollancz, 1972), pp. 56-57; and "Background of the Blues," in Black America, ed. John F. Szwed (New York: Basic Books, 1970), p. 145, respectively.

⁸ "Blues to Drive the Blues Away," in Jazz, ed. Nat Hentoff and Albert J. McCarthy (New York and Toronto: Rinehart, 1959), p. 87.

sidering the lack of sure evidence in this matter. In a later chapter, we shall see that the blues singer is quite eclectic in terms of the source of his blues lyrics; it might be assumed that the blues itself was equally eclectic in terms of the source of its form.

The question of when the blues became an identifiable sub-genre of black folksong is less controversial, but not necessarily more answerable than the previous questions. The etymology of the word "blues" does not supply the answer. Paul Oliver has stated that the word was current in the English language for at least half a century before 1619, the year the first slave came to America.⁹ The earliest reference to the word "blue" in the Oxford English Dictionary with the meaning "affected with fear, discomfort, anxiety, etc.; dismayed, perturbed, discomfited; depressed, miserable, low-spirited, esp. in phr. To look blue. Blue funk (slang): extreme nervousness, tremulous dread," is 1550.¹⁰

The new supplement to the OED treats the word "blues," meaning a "melody of a mournful and haunting character," as a fairly modern invention, originating with W. C. Handy's tune title "Memphis Blues" in 1912¹¹; but Ma Rainey, in an interview with John W. Work, claimed to have coined the term in 1902 "in a moment of inspiration."¹²

The word "blues," however, used in the context of songs titles and lyrics is much older than these references. Perhaps the earliest use of

⁹ The Meaning of the Blues (New York: Collier Books, 1963), p. 333.

¹⁰ "Blue," I, 3, fig., OED, I, 943.

¹¹ As quoted in John H. Cowley, "Blues with a Meaning?" Blues Unlimited, No. 100 (April 1973), p. 48.

¹² American Negro Songs and Spirituals (New York: Bonanza Books, 1940), p. 32.

the word "blues" in a song, with substantially the same meaning as in the blues, is the song "I Have Got the Blues To Day!" written by Sarah M. Graham, with music composed by Gustave Blessner, which was published in 1850:

This world appear'd last night to me,
A very pleasant world to be,
Life was a rosy dream I vow,
It seems a horrid night mare now!

Then I was gayest of the gay,
But I have got the blues to day;
Then I was gayest of the gay,
But I have got the blues to day.

Last night to Fannie, lovely maid!
I gave a charming serenade;
And ev'ry minute wished an hour,
That I might linger near her bow'r:

But Little Fannie has gone away,
And I have got the blues to day;
But Little Fannie has gone away,
And I have got the blues to day.

Last ev'ning seem'd a joyous time,
With Fannie, music friends and wine;
I and my gay companions laugh'd,
And sung, and flowing bowls we quaff'd:

I should not wonder much if they,
Had got, like me the blues to day;
I should not wonder much if they,
Had got, like me, the blues to day

I wish that I had never been,
Or what is past, a fancy scene,
But more, oh! more than all I sigh,
That Fannie ever pleased mine eye;

Or that the charmer went away,
To leave me in the blues to day;
Or that the charmer went away,
To leave me in the blues to day!¹³

¹³ "I Have Got the Blues To Day!" (New York: Firth Pond, and Troy, N.Y.: J. W. Kinnicutt, 1850), from the Starr Collection of Sheet Music, Lily Library, Indiana University.

There is, however, little in this song to suggest that it is a direct antecedent of the blues. The texture of the lyrics is certainly very different from that of the blues and the text has pretensions to elegance which would not be found in the blues. But the song gives clear evidence that the word "blues" was used in popular song tradition long before either W. C. Handy's "Memphis Blues" or Rainey's rather specious claim.

If the words "blue" and "blues" are of no help in determining the origin of the blues song, is there any historical evidence which might answer the question? W. C. Handy is called the Father of the Blues, and indeed, he may have been the first to print and publish a blues song; but he admits to hearing a streetsung blues, which inspired his own career as a composer, at least as early as 1892.¹⁴

The origin of the blues song, then, probably lies somewhere in the nineteenth century. Most scholars would agree with this statement, but not all would agree as to which part of that century saw the emergence of this folksong form. Harry Oster believes that the blues originated during the time of slavery, but that evidence is lacking because of the poor preservation of secular slave songs.¹⁵ Alfons Dauer also dates the emergence of the blues to the pre-Civil War period, since his historical

¹⁴ *The Father of the Blues: An Autobiography*, ed. Arna Bontemps (1941; rpt. London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1957), p. 142. Handy published "Memphis Blues" in September of 1912. In the same year, however, Hart A. Wand published "Dallas Blues" (Oklahoma City: Wand Publishing Co., 1912), so that it is not clear as to who was the first to print the blues. Wand's "Dallas Blues" can be found in the Starr Collection of Sheet Music, Lilly Library, Indiana University.

¹⁵ "Background of the Blues," p. 144.

classification of the blues places "der archaische Blues" between the years 1850 and 1890.¹⁶

Rudi Blesh believes that the blues originated around the time of the Civil War,¹⁷ whereas William Ferris states that the blues could not have originated until after the Civil War, since its development depended to a great extent on a mobile, rather than sedentary, black population in the United States.¹⁸ Alain Locke places the blues in the "Second Age of Minstrelsy" in the years 1875-1895,¹⁹ and David Evans similarly states that "the blues as a genre of music did not arise until around 1890."²⁰ Samuel Charters is alone in his view that the "formal pattern" of the blues did not emerge until the years just before World War I.²¹

What all these scholars would agree upon is that there is no firm evidence to back up their theories. But if the exact origin of the blues is impossible to determine, the period in which the blues as a genre became a recognized part of the black performer's repertoire can, to some extent, be ascertained. Accounts given by the older blues singers concerning the repertoires of the next older generation to theirs indicate

¹⁶ Der Jazz, p. 79.

¹⁷ Shining Trumpets: A History of Jazz, 2nd ed. (New York: Knopf, 1958), p. 102.

¹⁸ Blues from the Delta (London: Studio Vista, 1970), p. 28.

¹⁹ The Negro and His Music, Bronze Booklet, No. 2 (1936; rpt. New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1969), p. 11.

²⁰ "Africa and the Blues," p. 29.

²¹ The Poetry of the Blues (New York: Oak Publications, 1963), p. 11.

that the blues "came of age" in the last two decades of the nineteenth century.

The majority of the blues singers who were recorded by race record companies were born between the years of 1890 and 1910, when the blues was probably a very new form of song. Those few bluesmen who were born before that period show a marked preference for non-blues items in their repertoires. Frank Stokes, who was born around 1865,²² may have been the oldest blues singer to record, and his repertoire is peppered with minstrel show pieces such as "You Shall" and "Chicken You Can Roost Behind the Moon." Gus Cannon, whose performing career began in the middle 1880's, played coon songs, ballads, and minstrel pieces exclusively at that time,²³ and even in the 1920's and 1930's, when he made his first recordings, his repertoire was largely composed of songs from the pre-blues era.

Much the same can be said of the other recording artists who were born before 1890; artists such as Papa Charlie Jackson, Huddie Ledbetter, Jim Jackson, and Henry Thomas all included pre-blues songs in large proportions in their repertoires. Kip Lornell summarizes some of the types of songs that the black performers would be singing in the last two decades of the nineteenth century:

What type of music was predominant if the blues was only in a neophyte stage of popularity? There seem to have been three basic types of music around. First, there were common stock songs between blacks and whites alike that had probably been around for a good number of years. They are similar to the blues and are still in the repertoire of many older musicians today. These would include songs like "Salty Dog," "Jack O' Diamonds" and Leslie's

²² Bengt Olsson, "Frank Stokes The Beale Street Sheik," Blues Unlimited, No. 100 (April 1972), p. 25.

²³ Bengt Olsson, "Biography," record notes to Herwin 208.

[Riddle] own "K.C." Leslie stated that his uncle had been playing songs like that for a long time and that his uncle had been "playing guitar off and on all his life." Another song in Ed Martin's repertoire, "Candy Man," would also fit in this category. Second, there was ragtime material. The late Reverend Gary Davis was part of a small string band around Greenville, South Carolina, with Blind Willie Walker around 1913 and much of their material was ragtime. Leslie says that "ragtime was mostly what was around then." Finally, there was blues. It was probably a fairly new type of music at the time, though.²⁴

The songs of the older performers were different, but so was the instrumentation. The guitar and piano were played in the nineteenth century, but it seems that among the black performers of that time, the fiddle and banjo were the predominant instruments. In this respect, banjoists Gus Cannon and Charley Jackson are representative of pre-blues performers. Ninety year-old white musician, Richard Burnett, remembers black fiddlers and their repertoires from the last century:

Oh yeah: Yeah. Bled Coffee here in town, he was a fiddler during the Civil War, and the Bertram boys here, Cooge Bertram was a good fiddler. He was raised in Corbin [Kentucky]. Yes sir, there was a lot of black men playin' old time music. Bled Coffey [sic] was the best fiddler in the county. Been dead for years. I played many a tune with him--used to play with me, oh, 60 year ago. He'd play any o' the old songs that I did. The old-fashioned tunes, like "Cripple Creek," "Sourwood Mountain," "Soldier's Joy," "Fire on the Mountain"--them old-fashioned tunes is about what he played.²⁵

Sam Chatmon, of the famous blues-singing Chatmon Brothers, similarly recalls that

there was an older style around than what me and Lonnie and Bo played. Now my father he played the fiddle--old songs like "Turkey in the Straw" and such.²⁶

and Booker White also said that "many of the earliest tunes he recalls

²⁴ "Brownie's Buddy: Leslie Riddle," Living Blues, No. 12 (Spring 1973), pp. 20-21.

²⁵ Charles K. Wolfe, "Man of Constant Sorrow: Richard Burnett's Story 2," Old Time Music, No. 10 (Autumn 1973), p. 7.

²⁶ John Fahey, Charley Patton (London: Studio Vista, 1970), p. 18.

were fiddle numbers his grandfather played like 'Turkey in the Straw' and 'Old Man John Who Shot the Rabbit'.²⁷

The blues in the repertoires of these older musicians seemed to have been relegated to a low position in the hierarchy of songs which they performed. Being a new and unfamiliar form to these older musicians, they did not feel as comfortable with the blues as they did with the older minstrel songs, coon songs, and white pieces. The unsophisticated style in which they played the blues showed their unfamiliarity with the genre, as Tommy Johnson's brother, Mager, points out:

You take youngsters from my age on back. Of the youngsters, they knowed more than them older ones of this here playing music and singing and different songs and things. See, they had these little old jump songs. I don't reckon they was even worth getting a record on if they'd had that up then. But in them times we ain't heard nothing about no records and nothing like that. So all this stuff was going on before this generation come here. The little old blues they had to my idea wasn't worth fifteen cents.²⁸

Jeff Tilton writes that "Son House recalled that his father and uncle 'tried' to play blues but that these songs were not like the songs House learned to call blues at a later date."²⁹

From the evidence which bluesmen themselves provide, it seems that the blues was a type of song which very much marked off one generation from the next. In the last decade of the nineteenth century, the blues represented the music of the black youth, just as rock and roll music sep-

²⁷ Chris Strachwitz, record notes to Arhoolie F-1019.

²⁸ David Evans, Tommy Johnson (London: Studio Vista, 1971), pp. 18-19.

²⁹ Early Down Home Blues: A Musical and Cultural Analysis (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, forthcoming).

arated the youth of the 1950's from their parents' generation. Whether, in the same way, it was a form of rebellion to play or listen to the blues is difficult to determine, but those performers who were born in the late 1880's or early 1890's made the blues one of the predominant types of song in their repertoires.

By the first two decades of the twentieth century, the blues had become well entrenched as a major type of song in performance situations. Tommy Johnson, who was born in the 1890's, was an accomplished blues singer by 1914,³⁰ and he was, no doubt, typical of his performer generation in this respect. In looking at the history of the blues, Tony Russell sums up, quite well, the point to be made here: "But it is quite clear that the blues are a twentieth century music, even though their roots may be found in the 1880s and 1890s."³¹

The geographical context of the blues is somewhat more easily defined than its historical context. Speaking in the broadest possible terms, the blues is a form of song peculiar to the blacks of the continental United States of America. There is no evidence of a blues tradition among the blacks of South America, Central America, the West Indies, Canada, or the continent of Africa.

The more difficult question is where to place the geographical boundaries of the blues within the United States. The general belief is that the "home" of the blues is the rural South, but this answer is a bit too simplistic. Muriel Longini would place the geographical context of the songs she collected in Chicago, Illinois, "below the Ohio

³⁰ Evans, Tommy Johnson, p. 22.

³¹ Blacks Whites and Blues (New York: Stein and Day, 1970), pp. 30-31.

River"³² because of the southern-origin of her informants. The fact that she was collecting these songs in a northern city led her to assume that the enclave of blacks in Chicago were completely cut off from the culture of that city and were, in fact, a bit of the South transported to the hostile environment of the urban North:

Because they have almost no contact with their white neighbors, who practice a strict isolationist policy, a number of their cultural phenomena, barred from the normal process of assimilation with previously established culture traits, remain wholly foreign to the whites. For this reason there are songs which are not heard outside the bounds of the very much down-at-the-heel negro community.³³

This view, though containing a kernel of truth, is an exaggeration. As will be pointed out in a future chapter, there was a continual interchange between the musical cultures of the blacks and the whites, both in the North and in the South, in rural areas and in urban localities. Besides this fact, many blacks were well acquainted with urban life and, certainly by the first two decades of the twentieth century, a large part of the black population were no strangers to the urban centres in both the North and the South.

In respect to the blues of the race record era, it is by no means clear that they could be called rural:

The blues that Big Bill Broonzy sings and talks about had an indisputably rural origin amongst the Negroes of the southern United States, but were adopted by the coloured communities of the big towns so long ago that authenticity is not always precisely to be determined.³⁴

Jeff Titon, in referring to the common term "country blues," writes that

³² "Folk Songs of Chicago Negroes," Journal of American Folklore, 52- (1939), 96.

³³ Ibid., p. 96.

³⁴ Stanley Dance, "Foreword," in Big Bill Blues: William Broonzy's Story, by William Broonzy, ed. Yannick Bruynoghe (1955; rpt. New York: Oak Publications, 1964), p. 7.

the "term 'country' is troublesome because down home songs were performed regularly in towns and cities and by people who grew up in them."³⁵ John Szwed goes further in saying that "the formal and stylistic elements of the blues seem to symbolize newly emerging social patterns during the crisis of urbanization."³⁶

Ferris' view that the blues arose only after the black population became migratory has already been discussed (p. 63), but an expansion upon this point by Ross Russell shows that the blues is an urban as well as rural tradition:

After World War I, the breakdown of the sharecropping system and impoverishment of the small independent farmer contributed to the migration of the black people to urban areas. San Antonio, Houston, Galveston, Fort Worth, Dallas, El Paso, Denver, Tulsa, Oklahoma City, Omaha, Kansas City, and many smaller places soon had their rising population of Afro-Americans, their ghettos, their regional blues men, and their embryo jazz bands.³⁷

For the rural singer, the urban centre was often more enticing than his country surroundings, as David Evans points out:

In the 1920s Tommy Johnson began to spend more and more time in Jackson (Mississippi). The pace of life was faster there, and musicians were needed to play for parties and dances. With a large permanent population in the city it was possible for a blues singer to make a living almost entirely through music.³⁸

Many singers who are associated with a rural environment, like Tommy Johnson, were actually quite at home in an urban context. For example,

³⁵ Early Down Home Blues.

³⁶ "Afro-American Musical Adaptation," in Afro-American Anthropology: Contemporary Perspectives, ed. Norman E. Whitten, Jr. and John F. Szwed (New York: The Free Press, and London: Collier-Macmillan; 1970), p. 224.

³⁷ Jazz Style in Kansas City and the Southwest (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1971), p. 38.

³⁸ Tommy Johnson, p. 36.

although Son House was born in rural Mississippi, he spent most of his first twenty years in New Orleans.³⁹ Indeed, not all blues singers were born and raised in the country. Leroy Carr was born and raised in Nashville, Tennessee; Milton Roby, of the Memphis Jug Band, was born in East Memphis; Romeq Nelson, although born in the rural South, moved to Chicago at the age of six.⁴⁰

If this point seems to be over-stressed here, it is only because, in the past, the urban nature of the blues has been ignored or downplayed by scholars. The term "country blues," with all its connotations of rural southern life, has been used in the titles of books and record albums, and in scholarly writings in general, to describe a song phenomenon which is not exclusively rural in nature. Titon prefers the term "down home blues," which he uses in the title of his forthcoming book, Early Down Home Blues: A Musical and Cultural Analysis, but even this term implies a certain rural flavour to the blues.

Of course, much of the blues does have a purely rural origin. Many of the blues singers spent their time on the farms and in the small villages of the South. Some even shunned the big city life or the lure of the North, as did Skip James:

Soon [Henry] Stuckey was advising James to go up North, where musical opportunities seemed greater. To James this meant living in a "reprobated" city like Chicago which he felt should be "wiped off the map."⁴¹

³⁹ Al Wilson, "Son House," Blues Unlimited Collector's Classics, No. 14 (1966), p. 2.

⁴⁰ Samuel B. Charters, The Country Blues (New York: Rinehart, 1959), p. 142; Bengt Olsson, Memphis Blues and Jug Bands (London: Studio Vista, 1970), p. 36; and Tracy Nelson, record notes to Origin Jazz Library OJL-15, respectively.

⁴¹ Jacques R  che, "Henry Stuckey: An Obituary," 78 Quarterly, 1, No. 2 (1968), c151.

study, the similarities in the blues of different areas is of much more importance than their dissimilarities. In terms of text and texture, one would be hard pressed to distinguish regional differences. In fact, it is only after a rigorous structural study of the lyrics has been done, involving blues from all geographical areas, that the minute and subtle differences in text and texture between one area and the next, if they exist at all, can be identified.

What is being stressed here are the similarities between rural and urban song traditions, rather than their differences. In most blues scholarship of the past, the differences have been felt to be much more important. Harry Oster has set down strict categories for "country" as opposed to "city" blues,⁴² and, similarly, Charles Keil has made strong distinctions between "country," "city," and "urban" blues.⁴³

Likewise, scholars have made strong distinctions between blues from different geographical areas of the South. Perhaps Alain Locke was the first to classify black music into regional styles, using the categories "Virginia and the Upper South," "The Creole South," "The Seaboard Lower South," "The Mississippi Strain," "The Southwest," and "The Mountain Music."⁴⁴ In more recent years, terms such as "Mississippi blues," "Texas blues," and "Piedmont blues" have become acceptable designations in blues scholarship.

All these regional distinctions are quite useful if one is studying the differences in style, especially of the music, in different localities. Dave Hatch and John Williams, for example, have used geographic designations in order to identify specific chord progressions in the blues with different areas of the country.⁴⁵ For a structural analysis, such as this

⁴² Living Country Blues (Detroit: Folklore Associates, 1969), pp. 23-25.

⁴³ Urban Blues (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1966), pp. 217-19.

⁴⁴ The Negro and His Music, pp. 30-31.

⁴⁵ "The Country Blues--A Musical Analysis," Blues Unlimited, No. 21 (April 1965), p. 8.

IV THE CULTURAL CONTEXT OF THE BLUES

Within the historical and geographical boundaries described in the last chapter, there are a multitude of different cultures and sub-cultures. Clearly, not all of these cultures include the blues as one of the song forms recognized or accepted as inherent to the overall song repertoire of their people. Alan Merriam has shown how music is an integrated part of the culture in which it is performed and cannot be studied properly without taking this into account.¹ In defining the blues, therefore, the culture in which it is performed must also be defined.

It is surprising how few of the blues scholars actually define the culture with which they are dealing. For the most part, they assume that the reader, perhaps by instinct, automatically places the blues within its proper cultural milieu. To say, simply, that the blues is one of the types of song inherent to the Afro-American culture in the United States is to state the obvious; but an obvious fact is not necessarily an unimportant fact. Indeed, this simple statement is at the very heart of the definition of the blues. W. C. Handy has said, "I have the feeling that the real blues can be written only by a Negro, who keeps his roots in the life of his race."² In this one sentence, Handy has expressed the essence of the cultural context of the blues. It is a song listened to or performed by blacks, and by blacks living within the "black culture," however that may be defined, as opposed to those blacks who have been completely acculturated into the greater mainstream culture of the United States.

¹ The Anthropology of Music (Evanston: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1964).

² "The Heart of the Blues," Etude, 58 (March 1940), p. 193.

Paul Oliver, one of the few modern blues scholars who has bothered to state the obvious when he said that the blues is "the product of a racial group, the Negro in America,"³ has expanded Handy's simple statement:

If there is a conclusion to be drawn from this it is that the blues has grown with the development of Negro society in American soil; that it has evolved from the peculiar dilemma in which a particular group, isolated by its skin pigmentation or that of its ancestors, finds itself when required to conform to a society which yet refuses it full integration within it.⁴

As pointed out in the last chapter, the black's isolation from white society can be overstated, especially when speaking of song, but the practice of segregation of the blacks in the United States has produced, over several hundred years, a culturally distinctive society with considerably more permanence and resistance to change than the cultures of many other ethnic or immigrant groups in the United States.

The cultural context of the blues can be narrowed further in that it is very much the music of the working class, or lower class, black. This is partly a function of what Handy calls "roots in the life of his race," in that the upwardly mobile black who wishes to raise his social and economic status within the greater society, must become more acculturated into that greater society and thereby abandon his specific cultural identity. As Oliver put it,

As for the professional Negro men and the economically successful, they neither wish nor need to sing the blues . . . There are no blues by Negro teachers and professors; no blues that speak for the Negro lawyer, the Negro attorney, the coloured doctor, dentist, news editor . . .⁵

³ The Meaning of the Blues (New York: Collier Books, 1963), p. 25.

⁴ Ibid., p. 25.

⁵ Ibid., p. 330.

The phenomenon of rejecting the traditional forms of song within a culture by those who wish to "better" themselves economically and socially is not limited to the blacks. This same process has been partly responsible for the rejection of traditional song forms by upwardly mobile Newfoundlanders.⁶

No attempt can be made here to give a detailed description of black working class culture. This is a study which requires volumes rather than pages.⁷ Certain generalizations about this culture can be

⁶ See, Michael Taft, "That's Two More Dollars': Jimmy Linegar's Success with Country Music in Newfoundland," Folklore Forum, 7 (1974), 106-07.

⁷ Besides the books cited elsewhere in this chapter, the following were most helpful in describing early twentieth century black working class culture: Chicago Commission on Race Relations, The Negro in Chicago: A Study of Race Relations and a Race Riot (1922; rpt. New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1968); Allison Davis, and John Dollard, Children of Bondage: The Personality Development of Negro Youth in the Urban North (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1940); Allison Davis, Burlingame B. Gardner, and Mary R. Gardner, Deep South: A Social Anthropological Study of Caste and Class, dir. W. Lloyd Warner (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1941); John Dollard, Caste and Class in a Southern Town (1937; rpt. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1957); St. Clair Drake and Horace R. Clayton, Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City, rev. ed., 2 vols. (New York: Harper & Row, 1962); E. Franklin Frazier, The Negro Family in the United States, rev. and abridged ed. (1948; rpt. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1966); Zora Neale Hurston, Mules and Men (1935; rpt. New York: Harper & Row, 1970); Charles S. Johnson, Growing Up in the Black Belt: Negro Youth in the Rural South (1941; rpt. New York: Schocken Books, 1967); Louise V. Kennedy, The Negro Peasant Turns Cityward: Effects of Recent Migrations to Northern Cities, Studies in History, Economics, and Public Law, No. 329 (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1930); Benjamin E. Mays and Joseph W. Nicholson, The Negro's Church (New York: Russell & Russell, 1933); Hortense Powdermaker, After Freedom: A Cultural Study in the Deep South, Studies in American Negro Life (1939; rpt. New York: Russell & Russell, 1968); Arthur F. Raper, Preface to Peasantry: A Tale of Two Black Belt Counties, Studies in Negro American Life (1936; rpt. New York: Atheneum, 1968); Emmett J. Scott, Negro Migration During the War, Preliminary Economic Studies of the War, No. 16 (1920; rpt. New York: Arno Press and The New York Times, 1969); Carter G. Woodson, The Rural Negro (1930; rpt. New York: Russell & Russell, 1969); and T. J. Woofter, Jr., ed. Negro Problems in the Cities (1928; rpt. New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969).

made, however, which will suit the purposes of this operational definition. An understanding of the black family life, education, employment, religion, and relations with the dominant white culture will give a clearer picture of the world of the blues singer and listener.

In the first four decades of this century, black families, whether rural or urban, tended to be large and matrifocal. The greater number of children in a family, the higher the status of the parents. As Charles S. Johnson explains, "For men the size of the family is a test of virility and for woman fecundity has tremendous weight in their valuation as mates."⁸ Children in the family did not all necessarily share the same set of parents, as the concept of the "illegitimate child" was not a part of the black culture. It was not uncommon for the different children in a family to have several different fathers, or in fact, to be "adopted" from another family. Since there was no stigma attached to illegitimacy, all children in a family were equally accepted and cared for by the parents.

The families were matrifocal in the sense that the mother was the most permanent and stable member of the family unit. Because of both economic and social reasons, the father was often absent from the household. He might have been forced to work in a different part of the country and his visits home, if they occurred at all, were short and infrequent. Since marriages were for the most part common-law, divorces were simply a matter of one or both parents leaving home. It was common for a woman to be a single parent in a black household, either because she had moved away from her husband or her husband had abandoned her. The

⁸ Shadow of the Plantation (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1934), p. 58.

matrifocal nature of the black family is also seen in that the children generally travelled with their mother, rather than with their father, so that a woman might go through a succession of husbands, have children by several of them, and thereby have a large family of children who have several different fathers.

In addition to the large number of children in a family, other relations might also live under the same roof. Grandparents, uncles, cousins, and in-laws might share the accommodations of the nuclear family, either on a permanent or temporary basis. In the urban environment, especially, a family might include a number of "lodgers" who helped to pay the rent of the house. These "lodgers" were often related to the family in some way, but might also be unrelated persons whose only ties with the family were economic.

One of the problems of such large and extended families was the overcrowded conditions in which the blacks were forced to live. In rural areas, the homes were for the most part made of wood and consisted of only a few rooms. This description of a house belonging to an eleven-member family in 1908 is typical of the rural living conditions of many black families:

This country house is a wooden structure with boards running up and down. The roof is shingled with large home-made shingles. None of the walls are plastered, all of the floors are bare, and the windows are without glass panes, curtains or shades. They have wooden shutters.

There are two bedrooms and a kitchen. In the large bedroom are two beds, a dresser, a sewing machine, a cupboard piled with quilts, a table with a bowl and pitcher upon it, a towel-rack and a few chairs. They have newspapers pasted upon the walls and several advertisement pictures--"Fairy Soap," "Baking Powder," "Root Beer"--tacked on. There are no books except the Bibles of the different members of the family and a few old school books. They take "McCauleys Magazine," "The Yellow Jacket," the "Savannah Tribune," and the "North Georgian." There is a large fireplace.

The second bedroom has no windows and no fireplace. It con-

tains three beds and nothing more. The kitchen has two windows. It contains a stove, two small tables, a cupboard and a few chairs.

The front porch is a mere platform, with no top over it. The house is kept moderately clean. There is a large front yard, bare, clean swept, which merges into woods on one side and into a large kitchen garden on the other; from the front yard runs a path leading to another house. The back yard is also large, bare, and clean swept. It leads into the woods and cotton fields. There is no other house in sight of this one. They get their water from a spring near by.⁹

Urban dwellings might have been made of brick or stone, but they were equally crowded and poorly constructed. In fact, the sense of overcrowding must have been greater because of the lack of yards or open space between dwellings.

Education was minimal and poor. In rural areas, schools were often one-room shacks with a deplorable lack of facilities. It was quite common for several children to share a bench and desk built for one child. Maps, charts, and textbooks were rare, and usually the only teaching aid was a blackboard. The teachers were often poorly trained and not well-motivated. Teaching certificates were sometimes sold to applicants regardless of their qualifications. Transportation to schools in the rural areas was not very good, and children often had to walk great distances to the schoolhouse.

Given the poor facilities, the unqualified teachers, and the lack of transportation, it is no wonder that many blacks either abandoned their education early or got nothing of benefit from the schooling they received. In addition, because of the agricultural nature of most black rural labour, the children's schooling was continually interrupted so that they could help at crucial times of planting or harvesting.

⁹ W. E. Burghardt Du Bois, ed, The Negro American Family (1908; rpt. New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), pp. 68-69.

Despite the difficulties and disadvantages of black schooling, education was held in high regard by blacks. Most parents wanted their children to get as much education as possible, and those who had achieved some degree of schooling were considerably raised in status in the community. Blacks felt that an education would enable them to achieve better economic status, as well as protect them from some of the more oppressive aspects of living in a society dominated by a larger, repressive culture.

Formal schooling was supplemented by informal education in the home. This usually took the form of reading matter. In the description of the rural household given above, magazines and the Bible were prominently displayed in the main room. Black newspapers such as the Chicago Defender were also avidly read in black homes, and the radio and movies were a further source of informal education.

Urban schools were usually larger and better equipped, and might even be racially mixed in areas where black migration was still fairly recent. But, especially in comparison with white urban schools, black schools had poor facilities and the teachers were often poorly qualified. Conditions in the urban classroom were, if anything, more overcrowded than their rural counterparts, since the city school boards chronically underestimated the number of pupils who would be entering the educational system from the migrations of blacks to the cities. The atmosphere for learning was as bad in the cities as in the country, and therefore the motivation of the children was often very low.

Except for the few blacks who went through the educational system and became doctors, lawyers, or other kinds of professionals, the employment open to the black worker, whether in the country or in the city, was

limited to manual labour. For the rural blacks, this form of labour was found in the fields and on the plantations. Although some blacks owned their own farms, most worked as tenant farmers on the land of the whites. Those lower down on the economic scale than the tenant farmers included the share-croppers, who were not only supplied with land by their white owners, but also with the tools needed for their work, and the casual and migrant farm labourers who worked the white owner's land directly.

Whether tenant, share-cropper, or migrant, the wages were very low and there was no security of employment. The migrants might not be paid in cash at all, but were often given produce instead, so that they were even more dependent upon the agricultural system than the wage-earners. The yearly income for farm workers, whether they were tenants, share-croppers, or whatever, would rarely be over seven hundred dollars, and could be as low as three hundred dollars.

Urban blacks were generally employed at the lowest-paying and least desirable jobs in the city. They earned their livings in factories, stockyards, and sanitation departments, or were employed in low status service industries, such as table-waiting, shoe-shining, or washroom attending. Their wages might have been a bit higher than their rural counterparts, but their expenses were also correspondingly higher in the city. Whereas the rural black could grow his own food and make his own clothes, the urban black had to purchase these necessities.

Although men were the principal wage earners in black families, women usually worked to supplement the family's income. They would work in the fields or in the factories, just as did the men, but they also took in wash, cleaned houses, cooked, and cared for the children of the whites to earn money. Children in black families were also called upon to supplement

the family income, and from an early age would help in the fields or find some simple form of employment in the cities.

Religion played an important part in black culture. In rural areas, blacks had their own churches and their own hierarchy of religious officials, all quite independent of white religious institutions. In fact, the religious life of the black was probably the part of his culture which was least affected by white society. For this reason, the church functioned to cement group solidarity among the blacks in a way that their employment or schools could not do.

The activities of the church extended beyond the religious services to church-sponsored picnics, raffles, and other festivals. The church service itself was a time when the blacks could safely vent their anxieties and troubles over their place in society. This they did through singing spirituals, spontaneous preaching, and general emotive behaviour during church services. Speaking in tongues, the laying on of hands, and faith-healing were often included in the religious rituals of the blacks. This highly emotional approach to religion was of course quite cathartic.

Urban blacks treated their religion in much the same manner, although there was a greater chance that their church might be integrated. In addition to the traditional religious sects of the rural areas, such as the Baptist or Methodist sects, urban blacks established a number of modern religions, such as the Church of God, the Moorish Science Temple of America, or the Father Divine Peace Mission Movement. These sects often mixed religion and black nationalism, and functioned to better the lot of the black in urban society.¹⁰

¹⁰ For a good survey of these modern, urban sects, see Arthur Huff Fauset, Black Gods of the Metropolis: Negro Religious Cults of the Urban North, Publications of the Philadelphia Anthropological Society, Vol. 3 (1944; rpt. New York: Octagon Books, 1970).

Black culture has probably been more affected by its relationship to white culture than by any other factor. Whether urban or rural, the black was continually placed in a subservient role by white society, but how this role was enforced was quite different between the South and the North. In the South, the black was very consciously seen as being of a lower caste than that of the white, and for that reason alone, blacks were expected to act differently from whites and be treated differently by the whites. There were strict proxemic and behavioural boundaries which the black person must not overstep, if he was to live a secure life. For example, blacks always had to enter a white home by the back door, no matter what their social or economic status was vis a vis the white home owner; blacks always had to use "Mr.," "Mrs.," or some other term of respect when referring to a white person, whereas whites would never use such terms of address for a black person. In general, blacks had to occupy different sections of theatres, passenger trains, or other public places in the South.

In the North, the behaviour of the whites towards the blacks was not nearly so ritualized, since there was no conscious caste system as such. Blacks were discriminated against, however, in much the same way. They were the last hired and the first fired in employment; they received poor service, or no service at all, in public places; they had less access to equality before the law than did the whites. The difference between the treatment of the blacks in the South and those in the North was a difference in the ritualization and consciousness of the behaviour patterns of one group towards another, rather than in the actual substance of the behaviour.

There were of course many exceptions to the generalizations given above. Some blacks owned their own farms or their own businesses. Some

black communities had good school systems and well-qualified teachers. There were many examples of kindness and understanding between the races, both in the North and in the South. The view of black culture given above is in many ways a general impression derived from the many studies which were carried out on different aspects of black society in the first four decades of this century.

The most important point to remember about black culture, no matter how it is defined or described, is that it must be seen in its own terms, and not in terms of how it deviated from white culture. It is only in this light that the proper place of the blues within that culture can be examined.

If we define the blues as the music of the working class black in the United States, we must determine what were the uses and functions of the blues within that culture. In this regard, Merriam distinguishes between the overt or recognized role of music in society and its covert, often unarticulated role:

"Use," then, refers to the situation in which music is employed in human action; "function" concerns the reasons for its employment and particularly the broader purpose which it serves.¹¹

The use of the blues within its culture is as a song of entertainment and leisure, as Paul Oliver has pointed out: "The blues was generally the song of a man at leisure, when the day's work was done."¹² As will be seen in the following chapter, the blues was most at home as dance music for a weekend get-together, in a cabaret, or on a stage. In this way, the blues can be differentiated from the work song or field holler, which

¹¹ Anthropology of Music, p. 210.

¹² "Black and Blues," Observer, 27 July 1969, p. 7.

was used to relieve the monotony of work, to make time go faster, or to maintain a rhythm necessary for group labour.

Given this definition of the use of the blues, it is worthwhile to consider whether so-called prison-songs fall within the category of the blues. Black prisoners, because they were usually segregated from the white prisoners in southern jails, were clearly a sub-culture within black society. This sub-culture has received much attention from folklorists, partly no doubt because the singer is a "captive performer" and therefore easily studied and manipulated. Fieldworkers such as the Lomaxes and Lawrence Gellert have made valuable collections of black prisoner's songs, many of which have the text and texture of the blues.¹³

Many of these prison-songs, however, were sung in the context of a chain-gang and are thus songs of toil and not leisure. Unfortunately, there is little if any description of the leisure-time activities of these prisoners and what part the blues played in such contexts. Indeed, some of the songs collected in prisons may be recalled from the singer's non-prison repertoire and may be entirely inactive within the confines of the prison sub-culture. Given the lack of information on black prisoners as a sub-culture within the greater black society, the "blues-like" songs they sang must be considered peripheral if not completely outside the operational definition of the blues.

The functions of the blues deserve a book-length study and can only be touched upon here. Certainly, as an integral part of group leisure

¹³ See, for example, John A. Lomax and Alan Lomax, Our Singing Country: A Second Volume of American Ballads and Folk Songs (New York: Macmillan, 1941), pp. 380-404; Lawrence Gellert, "Me and My Captain" (Chain Gangs) (New York: Hours Press, 1939), and Negro Songs of Protest (New York: American Music League, 1936).

activity, the blues functions to keep the community cohesive and to maintain the black community's identity as a group. Merriam has labelled these functions the "validation of social institutions and religious rituals," "contribution to the continuity and stability of culture," and "contribution to the integration of society."¹⁴

These are functions of the ritual or group entertainment as a whole, however, and not specifically that of the blues. One function which the blues song itself seems to have in black culture is what Merriam would call the "function of emotional expression" (pp. 219-23), or catharsis. Whitney Bajliett and Harry Oster have both recognized this function of the blues,¹⁵ and certainly the universal truths espoused in the lyrics of the blues are cathartic. By identifying his own problems with the troubles and joys of the blues persona, the singer and his audience can get some emotional release from their tensions and anxieties.

The very fact, however, that the blues is perceived as a leisure-time activity gives this song form a cathartic function, since the singer and audience can unburden themselves of the physical and emotional drain of the work-day. Of course, other forms of song also have a cathartic function, such as the spiritual and the "protest" prison-song, but the blues is particularly "escapist" in that the singer or listener can painlessly express his anxieties through the blues persona and enjoy doing it. There is not the sense of purgation as with the spiritual, nor the bitterness of the protest song. The dancing that often accompanies the blues is, in itself,

¹⁴ Anthropology of Music, pp. 224-27.

¹⁵ "Jazz Records: The Best Medicine," *New Yorker*, 25 October 1958, p. 115; and "Background of the Blues," in *Black America*, ed. John F. Szwed (New York: Basic Books, 1970), p. 155, respectively.

a form of catharsis, and may actually give more emotional release to the participants than the accompanying blues.

Perhaps the one function which the blues has exclusively, as a separate phenomenon from its contextual setting, is what Merriam has termed the "function of aesthetic enjoyment" (p. 223). The subject of the aesthetics of the blues is indeed a complex one, and beyond the scope of this study, but it is clear that the blues singer would not go to such pains with his lyrics, as will be seen, if there were not a strong aesthetic function of the blues. The blues is recognized as a creative endeavour which takes above-average talent to perform. Anyone can dance, or join in the singing of a spiritual, but the blues is the property of the artist, of the verbal craftsman, and is recognized as such by the black culture.

Admittedly, this overview of early twentieth century black culture is superficial. Much more could be learned from contemporary accounts than is given here; for example, the novels of writers such as Odum or Peterkin are storehouses of cultural information.¹⁶ Works on modern black society might be projected backwards to apply to earlier black culture; Abrahams' work on urban black society and Jackson's studies of modern prison life would no doubt be helpful in this respect.¹⁷ But the preceding description of the cultural context of the blues, brief as it is, should suffice for the purposes of this analysis.

¹⁶ Howard W. Odum, Cold Blue Moon: Black Ulysses Afar Off (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1931), and Rainbow Round My Shoulder: The Blue Trail of Black Ulysses (no pl.: Grosset & Dunlap by arrangement with Bobbs-Merrill, 1928); and Julia Peterkin, Roll, Jordan, Roll (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1933), are some examples.

¹⁷ Roger D. Abrahams, Deep Down in the Jungle . . . : Negro Narrative from the Streets of Philadelphia (Hatboro, Pa.: Folklore Associates, 1964); and Bruce Jackson, In the Life: Versions of the Criminal Experience (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972) and Wake Up Dead Man: Afro-American Worksongs from Texas Prisons (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1972).

V. PERFORMANCE CONTEXTS OF THE BLUES

In recent years, folklorists have been urged to study folklore from the point of view of performance, rather than as an isolated, disembodied text.¹ Few scholars, however, have actually done detailed analyses of the general kinds of contexts in which folklore events are performed, and fewer still have worked on the different performance contexts of song traditions.²

Unfortunately, in the historical period with which this study is concerned, 1920-1942, scholars tended to view the blues as folk song texts in isolation, rather than as performances within a cultural milieu (when they viewed the blues at all), and there was no scientific investigation of the contexts surrounding performances. Exactly how the blues was performed in various contexts is now, at this late date, difficult to determine. We must rely on the few contemporary accounts which exist, often distorted by a romantic vision of the blues; on the reminiscences

¹ See especially, Dell Hymes, "Breakthrough Into Performance," in *Folklore: Performance and Communication*, ed. Dan Ben-Amos and Kenneth S. Goldstein (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1975), pp. 11-74; and William Hugh Jansen, "Classifying Performance in the Study of Verbal Folklore," in *Studies in Folklore: In Honor of Distinguished Service Professor Stith Thompson*, Indiana University Publications Folklore Series, No. 9, ed. W. Edson Richmond (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1957), pp. 110-18.

² Roger Abrahams has touched on this aspect of song scholarship in "Creativity, Individuality, and the Traditional Singer," *Studies in Literary Imagination*, 3 (1970), 5-36, and *A Singer and Her Songs: Almeda Riddle's Book of Ballads* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1970), both of which deal with the effect of performance contexts on a singer's repertoire. See also, Henry Glassie, "'Take That Night Train to Selma': An Excursion to the Outskirts of Scholarship," in *Folksongs and Their Makers*, ed. Henry Glassie, Edward D. Ives and John F. Szwed (Bowling Green: Bowling Green Univ. Popular Press, [1970]), pp. 1-68, for a study of one song in different performance contexts.

88

of the few aging performers who have been found and interviewed; and on the historical reconstructions, both scholarly and not-so-scholarly, which have been attempted by present-day scholars.

Our picture of blues performance contexts is by no means completely obscured, and we can get some idea of the diversity of contexts in which the blues was performed. This is a very important point, which is often overlooked by blues researchers: the performance of the blues was not tied to one set of contextual circumstances, but rather it was a performance which was found in an extremely varied number of situations. Derrick Stewart-Baxter makes this point in the following way:

Blues are all things to all men of the race; they are the songs of the primitive guitarist sitting beside the railroad track; they are, too, the sound of some barrel-house pianist pounding away far into the Mississippi night; they are the commercial Rock of the blues bands; they are the earthy ribald 'dozens' of the medicine show, or the cabaret blues of the edge-of-town club; they are certainly contained in the 'show-biz' routines of the travelling troupes, and in the latest hit of the recording star, or an unknown field worker singing as he toils.³

Paul Oliver similarly states that the blues was being performed by "Vaudeville and tent-show singers, circus artists and barnstormers, medicine-show entertainers and wandering troubadours, street beggars and fieldhands, folk minstrels with guitars and gin-mill musicians at battered pianos, singers with boogie-woogie pianists, vocalists with washboard, jug and jazz bands."⁴

It is also important to realize that the individual performer was not necessarily tied to a specific context in his or her singing of the blues. Most blues singers in fact, were at home in a number of different perform-

³ Ma Rainey and the Classic Blues Singers (London: Studio Vista, 1970), pp. 8-9.

⁴ The Meaning of the Blues (New York: Collier Books, 1963), pp. 22-23.

ing situations:

They sang their songs in the railroad stations, on the street corners, in eating places, in honky-tonk night spots, and even on trains. They also sang for community social affairs, dances, and picnics.⁵

Robert Wilkins could be found at "pig stands," sporting houses, hotels, houseparties, and the like,"⁶ and, according to Thomas Dorsey, the urban singer, Tampa Red, could turn up "just anywhere--party, theater, dance hall, juke joint. He was playin' on the streets too."⁷ Nor were the blues pianists particularly tied to one context, despite the immovability of their instrument. As zur Heide states, "Through their versatility, some of these pianists resist any categorization--they were at home in jazz bands, honky-tonks, and cocktail lounges."⁸ Vaudeville singers also had their varied contexts, as Lawrence Cohn points out in reference to Ma Rainey:

"She was a performer, a dancer, singer of vaudeville songs, and of bawdy, double-entendre offerings. She was a tent-show performer, a carnival and circus artist and also sung ballads in addition to all the aforementioned. Thus, in sum total, she was a consummate singer-artist whose skills and talents were considerable."⁹

Many blues singers could perform, not only in different contexts, but in contexts which were completely antithetical to each other:

It was not uncommon for a blues musician to follow a Saturday

⁵ Eileen Southern, The Music of Black Americans: A History (New York: Norton, 1971), p. 336.

⁶ Pete Welding, "Tapescripts: Interview with Rev. Robert Wilkins (T7-155)," BMF Newsletter, 2, No. 3 (1967), 58.

⁷ Jim O'Neal and Amy O'Neal, "Living Blues Interview: Georgia Tom Dorsey," Living Blues, No. 20 (Mar.-April 1975), p. 26.

⁸ Karl G. zur Heide, Deep South Piano: The Story of Little Brother Montgomery (London: Studio Vista, 1970), pp. 13-14.

⁹ Record notes to Biograph BLP-12001.

night's playing for dances, gamblers and drinkers at a barrelhouse, juke joint or country party with a Sunday morning's church service in which his guitar furnished the musical impetus for song worship.¹⁰

This is not to suggest that the blues was sung in church, but that the artist could perform quite naturally in such different situations. Blues might be played at a community picnic or a bawdy house and gambler's den by the same performer, although, as will be pointed out later, the performance of the blues may vary considerably in those different contexts.

What were some of these contexts in which the blues might be performed and how can they be classified according to the type of blues performance found in them? Jansen speaks of high and low degrees of performance depending upon the function of the folklore event in a particular context, and further states that where the function of an item of folklore is purely entertainment, the degree of performance is high.¹¹ Since the blues has already been defined as a song of leisure, functioning primarily as entertainment, its degree of performance would be deemed high according to Jansen. We must therefore look at shades of "highness" in degree of performance in the blues in order to classify the various performance contexts according to some logical system.

Perhaps the best way of arriving at such a classificatory system is to look at the relationship of audience to performer in the different contexts.¹² We soon see that either the performer is completely ignored by his audience, or that he is at the very centre of attention of those

¹⁰ Pete Welding, record notes to Origin Jazz Library OJL-12.

¹¹ "Classifying Performance," p. 116.

¹² Two previous studies at Memorial University have classified performance according to audience-performer interactions: Wilfred W. Wareham has classified the performances of a Newfoundland traditional singer according to "formal" and "informal" performance contexts in "Social Change and Musical Tradition: The Role of Singing in the Life of a Newfoundland

in hearing range, or that he lies on a continuum between these two extremes. Likewise, the audience may be entirely incidental to the reasons for the blues singer's performance, or may be the very *raison d'être* of his blues singing, or, again, may be on a continuum between these two points.¹³

These two continua might be termed "degrees of conscious interaction" between performer and audience; "conscious," because it must be assumed that wherever an artist's performance is audible, or visible, there will be some unconscious interaction, whether willing or otherwise, on the part of both performer and audience. But when the artist perceives that he is being listened to or watched, and when the audience perceives that the performer is directing his attentions towards them, this interaction becomes conscious.

The importance of this way of distinguishing different performance contexts is that the level of conscious interaction will determine, to a very great extent, the shape that the performance will take. The more conscious the artist is of being a performer, the more he will shape or alter his performance according to what he perceives to be the audience's expectations, and according to the actual feedback he consciously receives

Traditional Singer," M.A. Thesis Memorial University of Newfoundland 1972, pp. 148-88; and I. Sheldon Posen has studied "liturgical" and "lay" performance contexts in camp singing situations in "Song and Singing Traditions at Children's Summer Camps," M.A. Thesis Memorial Univ. 1974, pp. 30-36.

¹³ Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett discusses this aspect of performance to some degree in "The Concept and Varieties of Narrative Performance in East European Jewish Culture," in *Explorations in the Ethnography of Speaking*, ed. Richard Bauman and Joel Sherzer (London: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1974), pp. 283-308, in that she speaks of narratives dominating conversational contexts under a variety of conditions (see her table on p. 307), but she views this dominance as a plus or minus factor in the context, rather than as a continuum.

during his performance. Likewise, when the audience perceives that it is the centre of attention of the performer, it will more willingly accept the role of audience, giving the artist the proper feedback expected of an audience in that specific cultural context.¹⁴

Perhaps the minimal conscious interaction possible is when the blues singer sings to himself. He may do this simply as self-entertainment or as practice, or, more likely, for both of these reasons; but, for whatever reason he sings to himself, he probably does not perceive any audience other than himself. If anyone happens to be in the same room, or happens to overhear the singer as he practices, that person would probably not respond in the role of audience in most cases. We can, of course, only hypothesize on this point, as there has been no scientific observation of a blues singer in this context.

Tommy Johnson's brother, Mager, recalls such a performance, but only as it relates to Johnson's death:

He was sitting on a couch at my neice's house. Some of them said he had his guitar sitting there on the couch, you know, just him and her there, and he was sitting up there playing, fooling around with it. And all at once he just fell over.¹⁵

We don't know any more about how Johnson was "fooling around" with his guitar that day, but it is interesting to conjecture as to how he perceived such a solo performance. In this context, the singer is consciously his own audience. He is giving himself constant feedback as to how

¹⁴ This point is discussed in reference to Newfoundland traditional performers in George J. Casey, Neil V. Rosenberg, and Wilfred W. Wareham, "Repertoire Categorization and Performer Audience Relationships: Some Newfoundland Folksong Examples," *Ethnomusicology*, 16 (1972), 397.

¹⁵ David Evans, *Tommy Johnson* (London: Studio Vista, 1971), pp. 86-87.

his performance compares with how he wishes to perform. It is only in this context that his performance is totally unimpeded by interaction with other auditors, yet, at the same time, he must be aware of how his song would or should sound in front of an audience. He is free to experiment with his playing and singing, but his reference point is, of necessity, the normal performance expected of a blues singer in his culture. Certainly his thoughts in such a context would be "how acceptable would this song be to me and to others if I were performing in front of an audience?"

When two or more blues singers gather together to rehearse with each other, or just to jam, there is obviously more conscious interaction than when the performer is alone. But, unless there is a non-performer listening to them, there is still no clear-cut audience as opposed to performer. Again, we have little information on what a rehearsal or jam session was really like. In Chicago, blues singers would congregate at Blind Blake's apartment to rehearse for house parties or other engagements,¹⁶ but we don't know what went on at these sessions. Joe Williams recalls that he and Charlie Jordan actually rented a rehearsal hall in St. Louis and charged a thirty-five cent admission to musicians who wanted to make use of it.¹⁷ Blues pianist, Cripple Clarence Lofton ran a sort of school of instruction where performers could gather:

Down on State Street, a little above 47th is a saloon, lately known as the Big Apple, which might well be called "Cripple Clarence's Boogie School." Here many young aspiring blues players meet to

¹⁶ Stephen Calt, record notes to Biograph BLP-12031.

¹⁷ Paul Garon, The Devil's Son-In-Law: The Story of Peetie Wheatstraw and His Songs (London: Studio Vista, 1971), p. 25.

hear and learn from Lofton and one another. Sometimes a fellow who is only a beginner comes in and Lofton shows him a few things, and before long he can play a piece or two. As Cripple Clarence says, "I gotta help these boys along, so when us old fellows are gone there'll be some more comin' up."¹⁸

In such situations, where performers of various degrees of proficiency are together, performer-audience interaction becomes synonymous with teacher-student relationships. The performer may perceive his role as a teacher, and therefore make a special effort to display his mastery of the blues. Depending on whether he accepts this role, the performer may either show his mastery in such a way that the student can learn, or may simply try to dazzle or confuse the beginner. If, on the other hand, the performer sees his role as student, he will be especially conscious of the reactions of his teacher-audience to his playing and singing, and try to alter his performance, quite consciously, to conform to his audience's expectations.

In this type of context, however, performers were most often confronted with musicians whose abilities were more or less equal to their own. In such a situation, competitive jamming might ensue, where each performer tries to better the other in a sort of informal contest. John W. Work describes one such competition:

After they had played three or four stanzas of a given song, one of them would start singing. When he was near the end of his immediate supply of verses he would sing directly to the other one, who would then take the song up and sing it until all of his verses were at an end. At this point he would in the same manner signal the first singer who was now ready with a new supply of verses recalled and some probably composed. This would continue indefinitely until one of them would sing this verse which closed most of their songs:

If anybody ask you who composed this song,
If anybody ask you who composed this song,

¹⁸ Frederic Ramsey, Jr. and Charles Edward Smith, eds., Jazzmen (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1939), p. 196.

Tell 'em sweet papa Gibson (or Woodard)
Jes gone 'long.¹⁹

Ishmon Bracey recalls this type of competitive jam session in one of the rehearsal halls in Chicago. He refers to this competition as "bugging music":

We stopped in Chicago about a day and met all the musicians there. At night we was going through there. They was going to record different places, Tampa and Blind Lemon Jefferson, Scrappy Black, Lonnie Johnson, all of them, Lou Armstrong. Down in the Loop they had a musicians' hangout. They had a musicians' union down there. They take out so much a month, a week, or when the payments be. But we wasn't belonging to it, and they just let us by, me and Tommy and Kid Ernest and forty-five Charley. They got all kinds of instruments or parts you want down there from strings to reeds. Blind Blake, Scrappy Black, Blind Lemon, and Lonnie Johnson, and a whole lot of them, Lou Armstrong and his band was there. They bugged music. They'd make you play. And they'd bug music and see who could beat one another. That's why you get good, you know. They'd go down there, and they would look for the bug music.²⁰

Obviously, there is a great deal of interaction among the performers in such a situation; but, unless there are non-performing onlookers at the jam session, there is still no audience separate from the performers themselves. During the competitive playing, each performer alternatively becomes audience and then performer and then audience once again. In this context, the feedback from one's competitor is of the utmost importance in determining one's own performance, since the artist is being measured directly against the talents of someone else.

The competitive jam sessions could become more formalized into actual blues contests, complete with judges and prizes. As early as 1922 such a contest was held in New York City with Trixie Smith, Daisy Martin,

¹⁹ John W. Work, American Negro Songs and Spirituals (New York: Bonanza Books, 1940), p. 36. William R. Ferris, Jr. reports a similar competition in Blues from the Delta (London: Studio Vista, 1970), pp. 53-54.

²⁰ Evans, Tommy Johnson, p. 67.

Alice Carter, and Lucille Hegamin as the contestants.²¹ In 1923, Perry Bradford and Clarence Williams set up a Blues Night in New York in which the contestants were Maimie Smith, Sara Martin, Edna Hicks, Eva Taylor, and Clara Smith.²² Such contests were held, not only among the female vaudeville singers, but among blues singers in general--even between men and women. In 1928, a contest was held in Dallas with Lonnie Johnson, Maggie Jones, Texas Alexander, and Lillian Glinn as the contestants.²³ (How any judge could decide who was the best from among such diverse styles of performance is truly amazing.)

Probably the best description of this particular performance context is found in Big Bill Broonzy's autobiography, wherein he describes such a contest between himself and Memphis Minnie:

The hall was crowded, everything was free and all the musicians that could get in the place was there and every musician had brought a bottle. The prize for me and Minnie was a bottle of whiskey and a bottle of gin and we had three judges.

I had to play first. It was on the first floor and they was looking in the windows, both black and white people. We had two songs to play each.²⁴

As Broonzy tells it, Memphis Minnie won the contest, but he grabbed the whiskey before she could claim her prize.

The prize was not always so frivolous. J. T. "Funny Papa" Smith once lost \$150 to a Blind Lemon Jefferson imitator in a contest.²⁵ (We can only

²¹ Stewart-Baxter, Ma Rainey, pp. 22-23.

²² Chris Albertson, Bessie (New York: Stein and Day, 1972), p. 57.

²³ Samuel B. Charters, The Country Blues (New York: Rinehart, 1959), pp. 77-78.

²⁴ William Broonzy, Big Bill Blues: William Broonzy's Story, ed. Yannick Bruynoghe (1955; rpt. New York: Oak Publications, 1964), pp. 138-39.

²⁵ Stephen Calt, Woody Mann, Nick Perls, and Michael Stewart, record notes to Yazdo L-1031.

97

conjecture that the winner was Tom Shaw, who defeated Ramblin' Thomas in a contest by imitating Jefferson.²⁶) Certainly, with such a prize, the entire performance would be taken with considerably more seriousness than the contest Broonzy describes.

The formality of the contest was heightened even further in a rather unique context--the folk festival. The Fort Valley State College in Georgia held a series of folk festivals in the early 1940's which included a blues contest. The contestants were local performers, but on at least two occasions, W. C. Handy was imported to judge the contest. Monetary prizes were awarded.²⁷

The performer-audience interaction in these contests is quite different from the more informal competitive jam sessions. The performer must now play to the expectations (as he perceives them) of one or more judges. Such an expert audience will not be pleased with a run-of-the-mill performance. Furthermore, unlike the face-to-face competition of the jam session, the performer is getting only minimal feedback from his expert audience, providing the judges are properly fulfilling their role of being impartial. His reward for performing well goes beyond the material prizes he might receive to include public acknowledgement and acclaim for his talent--a more heightened and fulfilling acclaim than he would receive from onlookers or his opponent in an informal jam session. His opponent, who in the jam session is the performer's primary audience, now becomes secondary to the judges.

²⁶ Lou Curtiss, "Tom Shaw Talks," Living Blues, No. 9, (Summer 1972), p. 25.

²⁷ Tony Russell, record notes to Flyright-Matchbox SOM-250. This album features Library of Congress recordings of the folk festival.

Up to this point we have seen performance contexts in which the audience isn't clearly differentiated from the performer. In solitary playing, jam sessions, and contests the audience is made up of performers, or at least cognoscenti of the blues. But in the following contexts, the performer is very much set apart from his auditors in a more classic performer-audience relationship. Conscious interaction, however, varies considerably in these performance contexts.

In certain contexts, the blues singer is much more aware of his role in the relationship than is the audience. He may be only one of several attractions or distractions occurring at the same time. This is probably the case when the performance context is a community outing or picnic. Lightnin' Hopkins first saw his mentor, Blind Lemon Jefferson, singing at a picnic for the General Association of the Baptist Church.²⁸ Although writing of the mid-1950's, Frederic Ramsey's description of a picnic may not be too far removed from some similar function twenty years earlier:

Like most country musicians, the Laneville-Johnson men never played to large or sophisticated audiences. Each summer calls forth only a small number of engagements. Occasionally, someone throws a party to raise money. A pair of shoats is killed and roasted over an outdoor pit, and sandwiches made with the tender slices are sold. Some amateur baseball games provide an excuse for a brief open-air concert. One enterprising grocer of the region throws open the doors of his large general store for Saturday night shindigs. For these few events, the men are never paid in money, but in kind. At picnics they receive more than their share of beer, barbeque or corn whiskey. At the cash store, the proprietor pays with a sack of flour or a strip of fatback.²⁹

In such a context, the performer must compete with a baseball game,

²⁸ Charters, Country Blues, p. 70.

²⁹ Frederic J. Ramsey, Jr., Been Here and Gone (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1960), p. 72.

a roasting pit, or any number of other diversions for the attentions of his audience. He must, to some extent, see his role as background music to the general festive atmosphere. Although the performer genuinely perceives and relates to his audience, he is very much aware that his performance, in turn, may be perceived only secondarily, if at all, by his auditors.

In the contexts of the juke joint and the house party, the performer is still very much a part of the background as far as the audience is concerned, but his role as a performer is probably more essential to the make-up of these contexts than to the context of the outing or picnic. Without live music, the picnic would still function and function quite well; there would be many other diversions to counteract the lack of music. But in the juke joint or house party, where dancing is one of the primary activities of the participants, the performer's presence is essential.

The juke joint is usually a rather rough shack used for dance parties on weekends:

So the Negro in search of amusement goes to the "juke" where he can carouse, dance, and join in the rough entertainment that the establishment affords. A timber-framed shack, with a low veranda and gaudy advertisements decorating the exterior, the juke is often closed during the week and comes into rough noisy activity on a Saturday night.³⁰

These make-shift dance halls were also referred to as "balls," "barrel-houses," or even "frolics" as in this recollection by blues singer Buddy Durham:

I played 'em [blues] mostly for frolics; I never did make no records. Down South, the folks barbeque hogs, a billy goat and sell it. Some of us played guitars, pianos, people danced. That's [sic] what we call a night frolic. This was mostly on Saturday night, we didn't have 'em during the week, 'cause we were working. Sometimes I'd play when I'm around the house, but mostly it was for

³⁰ Oliver, Meaning of the Blues, pp. 185-86.

frolics.³¹

The atmosphere in these juke joints is most often described as overcrowded and dangerous. Eyewitness, Alan Lomax, describes the scene inside a dance hall:

The lone guitar player was the entire orchestra at most of the dances I attended in the Deep South during the 'thirties and 'forties. Some wretched wooden shack far out in the country was the dancing house. By 10 p.m. it was packed with couples, dancing belly to belly, their feet barely moving in a slow-drag step that made the whole house reverberate like a great drum. In the corner of the room sat the guitar player, both feet whamming out the rhythm, the left hand frailling the strings of his battered guitar, the right whining out the blues notes between chords. Meanwhile, his powerful sobbing voice cut through the noise and carried the bitter ironic verses of the blues to the ears of every dancer.³²

Similar to the country juke joint was the urban dance hall. This contemporary account stresses the seamy side of these halls:

Several halls in Memphis were of a very low type. The regular public dances at two of them are operated by a Negro politician. A crowd in one numbered 600, and was a mixture of boys and girls of the teen ages with women who appeared hard and rough. When the lights were all extinguished except a spotlight, and the crowd danced the "mess around" to the tune of "Shake That Thing," the dancing was extremely sensual. To add to the low atmosphere, a singer would occasionally intone a verse reeking with suggestion. Some of the most extreme couples pivoted on one spot and gyrated their closely pressed bodies from their knees up. A policeman who ordered the lights turned on was told by the politician to "let the people alone and let them have a good time." The officer replied, "They are your own race, and if that is the way you feel about it go ahead; but it is a d--n shame."

Outside the hall men and women drank from the same bottle, and staged petting parties in their automobiles. Three girls were engaged in a heated argument over a stolen watch and indulged in much profanity. In front of the hall a girl lifted both feet from the ground as she hugged her friend and announced her intentions in such loud language that even the boy protested. A garage owner in the rear of this

³¹ Christopher Lornell, "The Effects of Social and Economic Change on the Uses of the Blues," *JEMF Quarterly*, 11 (1975), 45.

³² *Folk Songs of North America in the English Language* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1960), p. 577.

hall complains that the groups often crash the door and use his garage as an assignation house.³³

Son House stresses the rough and dangerous nature of the juke joints:

I decided that if I could make records and play at some decent parties, I would leave the country balls alone. Them country balls were rough! They were critical, man!³⁴

Whether all juke joints were, by nature, dangerous or violent places is a matter of conjecture. Certainly, in the rural and small-town areas of the South where most of the dance halls were located, there were few other outlets for the pent-up emotions and energies of the people. These Saturday-night affairs must have functioned as a release from the hard weekday life of the labouring man or woman, but, by far, the greatest form which that release took was in dancing and not in fighting.

The blues singer, in this context, functioned mainly to supply the proper rhythm for dancing, and, as in the context of the picnic, his audience did not need or necessarily expect a high-quality performance.

Edwin Buster Pickens, in his description of playing in a juke joint, points out this aspect of audience expectations:

Up and down the Santa Fe tracks in those days was known as the barrel-house joints. These places was located in the area where the mill was in; and you played all night long in those days. They danced all night long. And the blues was all they wanted; they didn't want anything else. They wanted them low. You didn't have to be fancy at all--you just bear down! Of course they had food in those places, drinks and coffee and so forth, and these men--people that attended them were working at the mill. They worked in shifts: this man's crew is off an' this man's is on; one shift goin' and one barrelhouse. That's what kept it goin'. It would take a couple of rooms, maybe a store.

³³ T. J. Woofert, Jr., ed., Negro Problems in the Cities (1928; rpt. New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), p. 276.

³⁴ Son House, "'I Can Make My Own Songs'," Sing Out! 15, No. 3 (1965): 42.

Course they packed 'em in like sardines. People came in and out at all times and of course the piano man, why he'd play a while and rest a while and go back and play again.³⁵

Similar to the juke joints but of a more domestic nature were the house parties. As implied in the name, these were get-togethers at someone's house for the purpose of mutual entertainment. Such parties, of course, are common in many different cultures.³⁶ Among the blacks it is both a rural and urban custom.

In the Rural South, such a party may be held to mark some special occasion, as Oliver points out:

To mark the conclusion of corn-husking, the raising of a house, a wedding, or indeed any social event that merited some form of celebration, "play-parties" were held which lasted until the dancer and celebrants dropped from exhaustion and liquor. Banjo, fiddle, guitar and piano rags provided the music, but when the early morning light was breaking over the hills and the energies of the dancers were beginning to flag, the musicians dropped into the blues, slow, interminable blues, and the couples "slow-dragged" across the floor.³⁷

Alan Lomax probably gives the most extensive eye-witness account of such a party.³⁸ His description of the party in full swing is quite similar to that of juke joint dances; but his account of the start of the party indicates that a wider portion of the black community took part in a house party than in the rougher juke joints:

Presently the guests began to arrive, some on horseback, some appear-

³⁵ Paul Oliver, Conversation with the Blues (New York: Horizon Press, 1965), p. 60.

³⁶ For a discussion of the house party in Newfoundland, commonly called a "time" there, see Casey, Rosenberg, and Wareham, "Repertoire Categorization," p. 398.

³⁷ Oliver, Meaning of the Blues, p. 186. Oliver's use of the term "play-party" should not be confused with the more formal gatherings in which song-and-dance games were performed, as described in B. A. Botkin, The American Play-Party Song (1937; rpt. New York: Frederick Ungar, 1963).

³⁸ "Sinful Songs of the Southern Negro: Experiences Collecting Secular Folk-Music," Southwest Review, 19 (1934), 109-11.

ing suddenly on foot out of the tall weeds; rattling up in flivvers, or driving their squeaking wagons. The babies were put at once to bed in a darkened room. The unmarried women, having dusted their shoes and plastered their faces again with paint, went on into the room where the dance was to be held, and walked about, giggling and chattering, while the young bucks outside smoked and spat, trying to seem unconcerned as to whether there was to be a dance or not. At last the hostess prevailed on Tom Moore, who had been invited to spell Burn-Down, to come in and begin the dance. (p. 110)

In the urban black culture, house parties were also common, and certainly must have been held to mark special occasions; but an added feature to the urban context of the house party was its function of raising rent to pay for the house or apartment of the host. These affairs were sometimes euphemistically called "social whist parties"³⁹ but, in reality, they were less refined than the name suggests:

The "parlor social" or "house-rent party", a Southern custom which was transplanted with equal effectiveness to Harlem, was a means of meeting the rent when money was low. Spending the last few dollars on jars of "moonshine" and "home brew", the host would engage a piano player--if he wasn't one himself--and throw a party for which admission was a quarter.⁴⁰

As with the juke joint dances, the audience's expectations of the performer at a house party were generally not very high; as long as he supplied music good enough to dance to, he was suitable in such a context. Compare what Buster Pickens said (footnote 35) about not having to be "fancy at all" in a juke joint with what pianist Romeo Nelson says in the following description of an urban house-rent party:

Word would go around about the various parties to be held during the evening, and people would go to the houses where their favorite pianists would be playing. No admission was charged, but

³⁹ Paul Oliver, "Blues to Drive the Blues Away," in *Jazz*, ed. Nat Hentoff and Albert J. McCarthy (New York: Rinehart, 1959), p. 96.

⁴⁰ Paul Oliver, "Black and Blue," *Observer*, 27 July 1969, p. 18.

people paid for the food and spirits they consumed. The piano player was hired for a set fee by the person throwing the party. The celebrations would go on well into the small hours by which time the guests were all pretty drunk. Romeo recalled, "You could get away with anything--just hit the keyboard with your elbows and fists; it didn't make no difference to them, they were so drunk by then."⁴¹

Notice in this description the alternative way of collecting money from the previous account of a house party.

Even though the performer might be especially invited and paid a fee to play, he was still not the centre of attention, but only a source of background or dance music. Of course, there may have been some parties where people gathered to hear a performer, but there is little evidence of this in the incomplete record of blues contexts we possess. Tommy Johnson's brother, LeDell, remembers Johnson playing for a children's birthday party,⁴² but we know nothing of the performer-audience interaction involved in this context.

The role of a blues singer at a gambling den is hard to assess because of the lack of information, but it must have been secondary to the role of the game in that context. Willie Borum recalls playing in a gambling den, but tells us little about his actual role there:

Once we [Borum and Noah Lewis] played at a crap game at 2nd and Marvel. The police arrested us all, but turned Noah and me free because we didn't take part in the game itself. But we got lots of tips there.⁴³

What we learn from this reminiscence is that Borum and Lewis were full-time performers at the game and not participants in the gambling. Their role as performers set them apart from their audience, the gamblers, in the

⁴¹ Tracy Nelson, record notes to Origin Jazz Library OJL-15.

⁴² Evans, Tommy Johnson, pp. 85-86.

⁴³ Bengt Olsson, Memphis Blues and Jug Bands (London: Studio Vista, 1970), p. 62.

same way that a blues singer is set apart from the audience at a party or juke joint.

In the bordello, the blues singer was obviously of secondary interest to his audience, who were there primarily to be entertained by another group of performers, the prostitutes. But, like the prostitute, the blues singer was a commodity to be hired for entertainment. Pops Foster recalls the line-up of piano players at a brothel: "They all sat on a bench out there and when there's a little party in one of the rooms a piano player is picked out who goes in and plays all night."⁴⁴ In this context, the role of the performer seems similar to that at a house party, but the following account by Joe Williams indicates that the bluesman played a more active role in the brothel's system of procurement:

He [the brothel owner] would go to Birmingham or Texas to get both girls, and musicians, to work. They featured entertainment in the houses--for different people coming to see the girls. While they were making their choice, they'd give them a good show. They didn't have no stage or anything. You'd be playing in a hall or just in a room there. The landlady'd bring the girls out in the hall; the guys would be standing around, and you'd play the music, and they'd do their acts. They'd dance and twist around to show off to the guys what they had.⁴⁵

Perhaps similar in function to the situation which Pops Foster described is the role of a blues singer, or more likely a blues band, as the private players at a white businessmen's stag party in Memphis:

Dewey Corley, who worked with both the Memphis Jug Band and the Beale Street Jug Band; recalls with amusement the "stag" parties at the Peabody [Hotel]. They were patronized chiefly by businessmen, who left their wives at home. Everybody became very drunk and very generous; the tips over-ran the musicians' wages.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ zur Heide, Deep South Piano, p. 24.

⁴⁵ Ibid., pp. 30-31.

⁴⁶ Olsson, Memphis Blues, p. 23.

But private minstrels of another type were also possible. In the late 1920's, Bo Carter acted as a private minstrel to the wealthy owner of a plantation, who, according to Carter's brother, Sam Chatmon, "used to take Bo out to his girl-friend's house, let him pick the guitar whilst he courted, and every time Bo would go by his house, he'd more or less give him 10 or 20 dollars."⁴⁷

These last two examples bring up the fact that blues singers played in the context of white audiences as well as black audiences. The black performer was somewhat exceptional, when compared to other performers, in the ease with which he switched from performing for his own culture to playing for the larger white culture around him.⁴⁸

In the contexts discussed over the last few pages, the bluesman's role has been secondary to that of other performers or diversions, but in the following contexts the blues singer will be seen to be increasingly closer to the centre of attention of his audience.

In streetsinging or serenading the primary performance is that of the blues singer. At the same time, however, the performer remains somewhat peripheral to the attentions of his audience. Even today, street-singers may be seen in most major North American cities. They may pace up and down a section of sidewalk playing an instrument and singing, with some kind of container attached to their person for donations; or they may be seen sitting in some strategic location at a building entrance or in a park. They may be blind, deformed, or in apparent good physical con-

⁴⁷ Stephen Calt, record notes to Yazoo L-1034.

⁴⁸ For a discussion of this aspect of blues performance see, William R. Ferris, Jr., "Racial Repertoires Among Blues Performers," Ethnomusicology, 14 (1970), 439-49.

dition; they may be in groups or solitary. Although much has been said about the bluesman's streetsinging, surprisingly little description of how it was done has been written. Perhaps such an urban scene was felt too commonplace by fieldworkers who were more intent on describing the wild parties and dances previously discussed. Folklorists, in general, are slow to realize the importance of the ordinary, in comparison with the extraordinary, in society.⁴⁹

Clifford Gibson enlivened his street performance with his trained dog, "which performed tricks atop a painted box to his playing."⁵⁰ Blind Willie McTell preferred to seek his audience, rather than use the sedentary approach, at least in this recorded instance:

Couples were parked in shadows drinking beer and taking advantage of the darkness and semi-privacy. Walking from one car to another was a short, stocky figure with a twelve-string guitar, singing whatever people asked him to sing. It was McTell, using a cane to help him get from one car to another, picking up a quarter here or a dime there from a giggling couple.⁵¹

Lightnin' Hopkins used the captive audience approach:

Otherwise I used to ride buses--yeah, free. They'd see me goin' down the street with my git-tar. They'd say "Hurry on boy! Jump on there! Let's go!" I'd jump up there, ring down on that ole git-tar there, make me a little piece of change between Dowling Street and West Dallas and back.⁵²

⁴⁹ Only recently has this context aroused the interest of folklorists. For an historical account of an early nineteenth century streetsinger, see Henry A. Kmen, "Old Corn Meal: A Forgotten Urban Negro Folksinger," *Journal of American Folklore*, 75 (1962), 29-34; and for a description of a modern streetsinger, see Patrick B. Mullen, "A Negro Street Performer: Tradition and Innovation," *Western Folklore*, 29 (1970), 91-103.

⁵⁰ Stephen Calt, Nick Perls, and Mike Stewart, record notes to Yazoo L-1027.

⁵¹ Samuel B. Charters, record notes to Prestige/Bluesville 1040.

⁵² Oliver, Conversation with the Blues, p. 75.

A more formal type of streetsinging was serenading, in which the singer would walk from one bar, theatre, or other entertainment spot to another and give a spontaneous concert. Jaybird Coleman used this technique:

That night he'd go into a bar or a theatre and start singing. He would take his big derby hat off his head and put it on the bar or table. After entertaining for an hour, he'd come out with that hat full of tips.⁵³

Rubin Lacy gives a more detailed account of this type of serenading:

We would serenade so many night a week unless we had a dance to play. Nothing else to do. If we didn't have no dance to play for, we'd all go out and serenade. We gonna have a big time that night. We'd just walk the streets and go playing. We'd all be together. And we'd start the music. And then folks would start to calling and holler-ing, white and colored, rich and poor. Well, we'd go to prop our foots maybe on the steps, play 'em a few pieces. They'd give us big tips. We'd go on to the next one. 'Fore we'd leave there, somebody else was holler-ing. And that of itself would get us a whole lot of dances.⁵⁴

Another type of streetsinging would be one in which the performing was actually secondary to the main task of the bluesman. The Hicks brothers, Barbecue Bob and Charlie Lincoln, would sing as they cleaned car windshields and served barbecued spareribs at a drive-in stand.⁵⁵

In order to attract the passers-by and casual listeners, the singer had to make himself the centre of attention. The singer had to display his talents by show-boating, clowning, or exceptional playing to an audience which was only partially willing, if willing at all, to take on the role of auditor. The audience, on the other hand, once attracted to

⁵³ Pat Cather, "Birmingham Blues: The Story of Jaybird Coleman," in *Back Woods Blues*, ed. Simon A. Napier (Bexhill-On-Sea?, U.K.: Blues Unlimited, 1968), p. 6.

⁵⁴ Evans, *Tommy Johnson*, p. 38.

⁵⁵ Oliver, "Black and Blue," p. 12.

the singer, became more attentive to his performance than would the audience at a picnic, juke joint, or gambling den, since the singer was the sole form of entertainment available in a streetsinging context. But their attention was, in general, fleeting, since they usually heard the streetsinger while in transit. Their role as audience may last no longer than a few seconds--perhaps just long enough to slip a coin in the cup--before they are again out of earshot of the singer's song.

From streetsinging we move to more formal "staged" contexts in which the blues was performed. The circus was, in some ways, similar to street-singing, though information here is extremely limited. It is known that Ringling Brothers engaged blues singers for their tours of the southern states,⁵⁶ but we don't know in what capacity. Memphis Minnie joined the Ringling Brothers circus when it passed through Clarksdale, Mississippi, in 1916 and apparently learned much about entertainment from the experience.⁵⁷ Derrick Stewart-Baxter conjectures that the blues singers performed in the circus side shows, since "apart from the Fat Lady, the Giants, Midgets, and Limbless Woman or the Alligator Skin Boy, the show had a number of 'acts' which could not be considered freaks at all, consisting of conjurers, Punch and Judy, and Sword Swallowers."⁵⁸

Though the circus context resembles the picnic or juke joint in that the blues performer was only one of many diversions, it also resembles streetsinging in that the audience was not necessarily stationary. The

⁵⁶ Bengt Olsson, "Frank Stokes the Beale Street Sheik," Blues Unlimited, No. 100 (April 1973), p. 27.

⁵⁷ Mike Ledbetter, "My Girlish Days," Blues Unlimited, No. 78 (Dec. 1970), p. 8.

⁵⁸ Ma Rainey, p. 38.

nature of side shows is a constantly moving, or milling crowd whose attention is continually being diverted from one attraction to another.

If the blues singer was not the main attraction in the circus context, he or she was certainly the centre of attention in the context of a night club or cabaret. For the urban-based artist, the small cabaret was one of the most reliable means of employment, since, unlike the house party or juke joint, the cabaret needed nightly entertainment. The Chicago Defender regularly ran advertisements announcing the appearance of blues singers at the small clubs in town.⁵⁹

An early account of the Pekin Club in Chicago gives a journalistic impression of the clientele and the atmosphere of the cabaret:

The crowd began to arrive. In came a mighty black man with two white girls. A scarred white man entered with three girls, two young and painted, the other merely painted.

Two well-dressed youths hopped up the stairs with two timid girls. Seven young men--they looked like back o' the Yards--came with two women, one heavy footed, the other laughing hysterically.

Two fur-coated "high-yaller" girls romped up with a slender white man. An attorney gazed happily on the party through horn rimmed glasses. The waiters called, shouted, whistled when each party arrived--a full table meant big tips.

At one o'clock the place was crowded. Meanwhile a syncopating colored man had been vamping cotton field blues on the piano. A brown girl sang. . . . All the tables were filled at two o'clock, black men with white girls, white men with yellow girls, old, young, all filled with the abandon noted about by illicit whisky and liquor music. . . . The Pekin is again the Pekin of years ago. Only more so.⁶⁰

Eyewitness Milton "Mezz" Mezzrow describes a night club performance

⁵⁹ See, Walter C. Allen, "Defender," Blues Unlimited, No. 69 (Jan. 1970), p. 22, for cabaret advertisements for Kokomo Arnold and Memphis Minnie, taken from the Chicago Defender.

⁶⁰ Chicago Commission of Race Relations, The Negro in Chicago: A Study of Race Relations and a Race Riot (1922; rpt. New York: Arno Press and The New York Times, 1968), pp. 323-24. Ellipses are sic. Source of the newspaper article is not given.

by Alberta Hunter:

... but when Alberta Hunter hit the floor singing "He may be your man but he comes to see me sometime," the house came down. Alberta kept working her way around the floor, stopping to sing a chorus at each table, so that by the time she was through she's gone over the one song ten or fifteen times, giving it a new twist every time. "Sing it, you sweet cow!" some fellow shouted from the table next to ours. The chick that was with him capped this with: "Yeah baby, he can't help it, it's the way you do it." Across the floor a stout brown-skinned woman yelled, "Aaawww, sing it, baby," throwing her hands over her head and snapping her fingers on the offbeat. Alberta really sent the audience singing "Some Sweet Day." Finally, for the last chorus, she got up on a small platform in front of the bandstand and did "her number." Every entertainer would wind up that way, doing a becoming little step and break all her own.⁶¹

It is obvious from this account that there is a great deal of conscious audience-performer interaction in this situation, but does the performer have the undivided attention of her audience? People go to a cabaret to hear the performer, but they also go to drink, relax, converse, or court. People-watching is as much a part of the night club context as is performer-watching. The blues singer must, therefore, work hard to maintain the audience's attention, and must accurately gauge the expectations of the cabaret audience to be truly successful. The bad comedian who struggles, unsuccessfully, to hold his night club audience is, in itself, the source of many comic routines. The audience, on the other hand, does not see itself, necessarily, as totally and completely in the role of audience in the cabaret context.

In other contexts, however, the audience is much more aware of its role: the medicine show, minstrel show, or tent show. Just as the urban performer looked to the cabaret for steady employment, the rural artist relied, oftentimes, on the travelling country shows for work. Many of the

⁶¹ Milton "Mezz" Mezzrow and Bernard Wolfe, Really the Blues (New York: Dell, 1946), p. 34.

female vaudeville singers, such as Ma Rainey, Bessie Smith, Clara Smith, and Ida Cox travelled with minstrel shows,⁶² but the rural male singers were also familiar figures on the minstrel or medicine show stage. Ishmon Bracy and Tommy Johnson,⁶³ Barbeque Bob Hicks,⁶⁴ and Frank Stokes and Garfield Akers⁶⁵ were among the many blues singers who found employment with the shows.

These shows were a big attraction in the small towns of the South and their entrance was usually accompanied by much fanfare and excitement:

For this is the period when the travelling entertainments appear: the circuses and tent-shows--Silas Green's from New Orleans, the Georgia Smart Set, the Rabbit Foot Minstrels or Irvine Miller's Brownskin Models. Gaily decorated trucks drive slowly through townships and laughing, dancing jugglers high-step on their "Tom Walkers" or stilts, drawing the children and their parents from the doorways, to follow the cheering procession to the show-grounds.⁶⁶

Although these were all-black shows, the performers still quite often had to wear black-face, as Gus Cannon recalls: "Had all that cork in our face . . . made us look even blacker . . . shit . . . painted our mouths white . . . made 'em look big."⁶⁷

Of course the medicine shows' main objective was to sell their wares, "dispensing concoctions based on alcohol, with a few additions to give them medicinal flavour,"⁶⁸ which, according to medicine show veteran

⁶² LeRoi Jones, Blues People: Negro Music in White America (New York: William Morrow, 1963), p. 89.

⁶³ Evans, Tommy Johnson, p. 70.

⁶⁴ Pete Lowry, "Some Cold Rainy Day," Blues Unlimited, No. 103 (Aug.-Sept. 1973), p. 15.

⁶⁵ Olsson, "Frank Stokes," p. 25.

⁶⁶ Oliver, Meaning of the Blues, p. 184.

⁶⁷ Bengt Olsson, "Biography," record notes to Herwin 208. Ellipses are sic. See also, Olsson, "Frank Stokes," p. 25.

⁶⁸ Olsson, Memphis Blues, pp. 13-14.

Speckled Red, "wasn't good for nothin'."⁶⁹ The blues singer's role in the show included helping to sell this medicine, as Gus Cannon relates:

Y'know the doctor would advertise his stuff & I'd run out there in the audience with soap, tonics . . . oh; all kinds . . . say, "Hold your hand up if you want it!" . . . after a while: "Sold out doc!" & he'd give me some more medicine . . . one bottle for a quarter; three for a dollar! . . . ha ha . . . that was a fast talking devil. I'd sell that & then we'd go on with the show.⁷⁰

In this context the audience was much more intent on the action on stage than would be the case in a cabaret. They had paid admission or simply gathered expressly to be entertained by the performers. Drinking, conversing, or courting took second place to the show being presented.⁷¹

A context which in some ways combines the features of the tent-show and the juke joint was the bluesman's tour of various work camps. He usually performed for a dance, and yet his audience's anticipation of his arrival and their relative captivity resembled that of the tent-show audience: Joe Williams travelled this circuit:

I'd hit all them turpentine camps down there. They'd have oxen pulling them two-wheeled carts dipping that turpentine. Boy, they'd have a wonderful time on Saturdays on those camps. When somebody like me went through there it was like the President coming there. They'd come from all over--they hear talk of a man coming there with a guitar. They'd get real rough on Saturday night.⁷²

There is even some evidence that blues singers were brought into factories to entertain workers,⁷³ but this was probably a rather rare event.

Probably the context in which there was the highest conscious interaction between performer and the audience was the stage show. This was the bread-and-butter of most of the female vaudeville blues singers, but,

⁶⁹ Oliver, Conversation with the Blues, p. 83.

⁷⁰ Olsson, "Biography." Ellipses are sic.

⁷¹ For more description of this context, see Charters' chapter entitled "Dr. Stokely, Dr. Benson? Dr. C. E. Hangerson . . ." in Country Blues, pp. 100-06, as well as Oliver, Conversation with the Blues, pp. 84-85, 121-23.

⁷² zur Heide, Deep South Piano, pp. 12-13.

⁷³ Olsson, Memphis Blues, p. 26.

as with other contexts, it was open to the male performer as well. Georgia Tom Dorsey,⁷⁴ Walter Davis, and Henry Townsend⁷⁵ were only three of the many bluesmen who appeared in stage shows.

The stage show could have a coherent plot as a vehicle for its songs, such as John T. Gibson's "Tunes and Topics" of 1923 which featured Bessie Smith,⁷⁶ or, perhaps more often, it was simply a review in the vaudeville fashion, with one act following another. The Chicago Defender gave the following description of a typical stage show, which starred Bessie Smith:

The curtain raiser is the act of Rastus and Jones, a mixed team working under cork, who have a more than ordinary offering. They are followed by Margaret Scott, a prima donna, who has been with us for some time but who never fails to "get hers" along a vocal line. Then comes the rightly named "Three Baby Vamps," whose dancing abilities have been developed by Hazel Thompson Davis to such an extent that the youngsters actually stopped the show. Robinson and Mack were fourth and on their "The Bootlegger" offering coupled with several nifty songs and a bit of dancing, went over in great shape. They preceded Jolly Saunders, one of the greatest of all comedy jugglers, and Baby Ali Co., a singing and dancing trio of fine caliber. Tim and Gerty Moore, in New Songs and dialogue, led up to the big noise (Bessie Smith), and proved by their popularity that they have not grown too old for high-speed competition. It is some bill.⁷⁷

These stage shows, like the minstrel shows, often toured the country and were usually booked into theatres by the famous, or infamous, T.O.B.A. circuit. The abbreviation stood for Theater Owner's Booking Agency, but was often referred to as Tough On Black Artists, or even Tough On Black.

⁷⁴ Arna Bontemps, "Rock, Church, Rock!" Common Ground, 8 (1942), rpt. in Anthology of American Negro Literature, ed. Sylvester C. Watkins (New York: Modern Library, 1944), p. 425.

⁷⁵ Neil Slaven, record notes to RCA International (Camden) INT-1085.

⁷⁶ Albertson, Bessie, p. 62.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 74.

Asses.⁷⁸ This circuit was made up of black vaudeville theatres around the country—some in fairly respectable condition, but many in a deplorable state where the performers did not even have dressing rooms.

The audience at a stage show was extremely attentive. The lighting at a show, spotlighting the stage, and blacking out the rest of the surroundings, automatically draws the auditor's attention to the performance. In this context, more than any other, the performer is at the centre of the audience's attention.

There are, of course, other contexts in which the blues may have been sung, but information is scanty. We know that on occasion blues singers such as Bessie Smith, Lonnie Johnson, Black Ace, and Robert Wilkins appeared on radio.⁷⁹ There was even a case reported of a blues pianist accompanying silent films.⁸⁰ But the point to be made in this chapter is that the blues could be performed in many contexts, and, though no one blues singer participated in all the contexts discussed here, few of them restricted themselves to only one context.

It must also be borne in mind that the conscious interactions between performer and audience discussed in these contexts do not represent rigid rules of behaviour. Special circumstances in any of these contexts could radically change the way the performer or auditor sees his role. The solitary strummer may, secretly, be trying to impress someone in the next room, or the person in the next room may be intentionally eavesdropping;

⁷⁸ Jones, Blues People, p. 89.

⁷⁹ Albertson, Bessie, p. 48; Oliver, Conversation with the Blues, p. 141; Paul Oliver, record notes to Arhoolie F-1003; and Richard K. Spottswood, "Rev. Robert Wilkins," Blues Unlimited, No. 13 (1964), p. 5, respectively.

⁸⁰ Oliver, Conversation with the Blues, p. 86.

a group of people may spend their entire time at a picnic hovering around a performer just to hear his blues; a singer in a night club may, in reality, be performing to one member of the audience who he or she is trying to woo. In any of these situations, the performer's quality of performing will probably change, the feedback between him and the auditors will be different, and his type of performance and repertoire will be affected.

The difference in audience-performer interaction, role expectation, and the very environment of the performing contexts heavily influences how the blues is performed. In subsequent chapters, the effects of these contexts on both performance of the blues and on the performer's general repertoire will be examined, but what is now necessary to understand is the performance context with which this study chiefly concerns itself--the recording context.

VI BLUES IN A RECORDING CONTEXT

In discussing the recording context, John Fahey writes, "It is true that the folk-artist in a recording studio, isolated from the audience to which he is accustomed, is in an 'artificial' situation."¹ Among the reasons he gives for this statement are the unique conditions under which the singer must perform. Yet, we have just seen that there are many contexts of blues performance, and that each is a unique situation in one way or another for the performer.

Is any context truly artificial? In a recording session a real performer is really singing a real song. Perhaps it is better to say that the recording context is just another context, instead of saying that it is an artificial one. Did the blues singer see it as artificial? If he was a professional artist, he was used to performing for money, or other rewards, under a variety of conditions. In his mind, perhaps this context was just another way of making a living, albeit a slightly novel one which took a certain amount of getting used to. To call the recording context artificial is to miss an important aspect of twentieth century processes of folklore transmission: the artist uses the media at hand, as long as it serves his purpose. The nineteenth century singer made use of the mass-printed broadside; the twentieth century singer makes use of the mass-produced record.

As a prelude to discussing the recording context, some background information is called for. The blues was neither the first type of song recorded by blacks in the United States, nor were blacks the first to record

¹ Charley Patton (London: Studio Vista, 1970), p. 8.

the blues. In 1895, a black singer named George W. Johnson recorded a "Laughing Song" on Edison phono-cylinder 4004,² marking the first time, as far as is known, that a black performer made a recording. In the years that followed, several black vaudeville singers and comedians made records, chiefly for white audiences. Among the most prolific of these early black recording artists was Bert Williams, who first recorded in 1901 and continued to do so until his untimely death in 1922.³

The first blues was, in fact, not recorded in 1920, as is often claimed. Long before that year, instrumental blues were produced on piano rolls by such companies as QRS, Connors, Standard Music, Universal Music, and Vocalstyle.⁴ In 1915, the white jazz singer Morton Harvey sang W. C. Handy's "Memphis Blues" on Victor 17657.⁵ It is not clear as to who was the first black to sing a blues, but in 1919 Bert Williams sang a song entitled "I'm Sorry I Ain't Got It, You Could Have It If I Had 'It Blues'" on Columbia A-2877.⁶

What makes 1920 such an important year in the history of blues recording is that, in that year, a blues was sung by a black artist expressly for a black audience: Mamie Smith recorded "That Thing Called Love"

² Ronald C. Foreman, "Jazz and Race Records, 1920-32: Their Origins and Their Significance for the Record Industry and Society," *Diss. Univ. of Illinois* 1968, p. 15.

³ For Williams' discography, see Brian Rust, The Complete Entertainment Discography From the Mid-1890s to 1942 (New Rochelle, N.Y.: Arlington House, 1973), pp. 666-70.

⁴ Foreman, p. 25.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁶ Rust, Complete Entertainment Discography, p. 669.

on Okeh 4113 on 14 February 1920.⁷ Until that recording, any blues on disc or piano roll, and indeed any black artist on record, was produced with the white listening public in mind.

The recording by Mamie Smith marked the beginning of race records; that is, records produced for the black "race," although the term "race record" was not coined until March of 1922.⁸ John Fahey has clearly outlined the scope and limit of race records:

The term "race record" was used by most of the major record companies to denote those records by black artists designed primarily for black consumption. It was not used for recordings of black artists such as the Fisk University Jubilee Singers, designed for the white market, because this group performed in European musical style almost totally devoid of indigenous black stylistic characteristics. Race records were generally sold only in stores in segregated black areas.⁹

It is not the intent of this study to give a history of the race record industry (this has already been done quite adequately by others¹⁰), but suffice it to say that most of the major record companies in the United States, and many minor ones, instituted race record series in the years between 1920 and 1942, and that, in these series, hundreds of black singers recorded thousands of blues.

What were the conditions under which the blues were put onto record? How were artists located by the companies? How did a recording session

⁷ John Godrich and Robert M. W. Dixon, Blues & Gospel Records 1902-1942, rev. ed. (London: Storyville, 1969), p. 641.

⁸ Robert M. W. Dixon and John Godrich, Recording the Blues (New York: Stein and Day, 1970), p. 17.

⁹ Charley Patton, p. 9. For an extended discussion of the use and history of the term "race record," see Foreman, pp. 107-20.

¹⁰ See especially Dixon and Godrich, Recording the Blues; Foreman; Godrich and Dixon, Blues & Gospel Records, pp. 10-29; and Jeff Titon, Early Down Home Blues: A Musical and Cultural Analysis (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, forthcoming).

performance differ from performances in other contexts? These are the questions which must be answered before the blues in a recording context can be clearly understood.

The first task of the record company was to find talent to record, and there were various ways in which this was done. One of the most profitable ways was to hire full-time or part-time talent scouts to search for performers. Many of these scouts were, in fact, A & R men (Artist and Repertoire men), who not only searched for talent but supervised the recording of the singers once they were found. Such a man was H. C. Speir:

He was always a free lance operator, as his main business was his store which stocked all the major [record] labels. His connection with most of his artists was as a talent scout and agent. He scouted all over Mississippi and New Orleans, though most of the music in that city was jazz, and he was more interested in blues and spirituals.¹¹

Like Speir, many of these A & R men were from the South and had a deep appreciation for black music and good firsthand knowledge of the black culture they were dealing with. But, at the same time, many held the typical prejudices of whites towards blacks in the United States:

It is perhaps ironic that a man like Speir could hold stereotyped views about Negroes yet also have a deep appreciation for and a considerable understanding of black music. Yet such was the case. His personal and business relationships with black musicians were apparently very honest and open, and I have never heard a bluesman who had dealings with him say anything but good about Henry C. Speir.¹²

These A & R men, as well as the record companies themselves, often hired local performers as subsidiary talent scouts in order to further expand the dragnet of the talent search. Pianist Roosevelt Sykes was, at

¹¹ David Evans, "An Interview with H. C. Speir," JEMF Quarterly, 8 (1972), 118.

¹² Ibid., p. 118.

one time, such a scout:

Those fellers [A & R men] figgered I knowed pretty well about blues singers and that I knowed pretty good materials when I heard it, so they asked me would I go out and find some new artists for them.¹³

Bluesmen such as Charley Jordan, Will Shade, Big Bill Broonzy, Lonnie McIntosh,¹⁴ and Charley Patton¹⁵ all acted the role of talent scout for the record companies. Another performer-scout, Thomas Dorsey, recalls,

... yeah, for we'd go down in Mississippi, down in those cottonfields, we lookin' for talent. Some of the fellows we could hoot down there in the field. I think they brought them up there [Memphis] and recorded 'em. The Peabody Hotel, that's where we recorded.¹⁶

Of course, it was not just a matter of going out in a cottonfield and plucking up the talent. As will shortly be pointed out, many of the blues singers spent much of their time avoiding the cottonfields. Even when a prospective talent was located in a field or factory, there were problems:

I had to have the letter [of introduction] because certain places we'd go fellers be workin'--you go in and ask them for an audition and the boss would think you come to steal the guy away. And you had to show them what you was up to; that you didn't come to steal the guy away and to show them what you was up to in that you were there for makin' records, and you didn't come to take nobody off their job and they'd return right back and carry on whatever they were doin'.¹⁷

On occasion, a performer would volunteer information about some unrecorded singer and thus become, in effect, an unsolicited talent scout. For example, there is some evidence that Paramount Records contacted

¹³ Paul Oliver, Conversation with the Blues (New York: Horizon Press, 1965), p. 107.

¹⁴ Evans, "Interview with H. C. Speir," p. 121.

¹⁵ Fahey, p. 25.

¹⁶ Jim O'Neal and Amy O'Neal, "Living Blues Interview: Georgia Tom Dorsey," Living Blues, No. 20 (Mar.-April 1975), p. 25.

¹⁷ Oliver, Conversation with the Blues, p. 116.

Ramblin' Thomas on the recommendation of Blind Lemon Jefferson.¹⁸ A & R man, Frank Walker, credits several of his finds to this method.¹⁹ Dixon and Godrich even suggest that rural customers would write recommendations on the back of mail-order slips when buying records from the companies.²⁰

The scouts would seek talent in many of the performance contexts discussed in the last chapter, but information on their techniques in specific situations is lacking. Some artists, such as Big Boy Crudup and Floyd Council, were found playing on the street,²¹ while Mary Johnson remembers being found by Mayo Williams while she was performing in a cabaret.²²

Once the performer was found, the talent scout had to persuade him to record. This may not have been a difficult task in most instances, but the scout usually had a "line" he could use to entice the reluctant performer:

With blues singers, he [H. C. Speir] usually used an approach similar to the following: "I hear you're a good singer, how about singing some of your songs for me?" After the singer finished, he would tell him, "You sound pretty good. You know, I make records; if you will keep practicing and get your songs together real good and come to Jackson [Mississippi] in a couple of days, I see that you get on records." If the singer balked at Speir's legality as a record scout, he would then tell the singer a long line of musicians he was responsible for recording, such as Charley Patton, Tommy

¹⁸ Gayle D. Wardlow, "King Solomon Hill," 78 Quarterly, 1, No. 1 (1967), 7.

¹⁹ Foreman, p. 161.

²⁰ Recording the Blues, p. 26.

²¹ Mike Leadbitter, "Big Boy Crudup," Blues Unlimited, No. 75 (Sept. 1970), p. 16; and Bruce Bastin and Pete Lowry, "Tricks Ain't Workin' No More," Blues from the South-East Part 4, Blues Unlimited, No. 70 (Feb.-Mar. 1970), p. 7, respectively.

²² Oliver, Conversation with the Blues, p. 98.

Johnson, Sam Collins, William Harris, etc.²³

If the scout were working in a major city, such as Chicago, he might enlist the help of already established artists to persuade the singers, as happened in the case of Big Boy Crudup:

So I went, and he [Lester Melrose] carried me to Tampa Red's house and we got over there and they had somethin' to drink, somethin' to eat, and we had a nice time sittin' round talkin' and he wouldn't introduce me to nobody--then he wanted to know, "Well, you ready to play us a little music?" I said "Yeah", so I was playin' some of Big Bill's pieces and some of Tampa's, and then I played "I got a coal black mare, how that horse can run." And so then, when they stopped me from playin', he says to me, he says, "How would you like to hear your voice?" : . . . Then he came just to introduce me to Tampa and Big Bill and all of them you know. Then I got nervous, then Tampa said, "Well, there's no need in your gettin' nervous, just go ahead!"²⁴

Sometimes it was not necessary for a company to look for talent; sometimes the talent found them. It was not unusual for performers to seek out the record companies for an audition. Sometimes a singer who had already auditioned or made recordings would suggest to another bluesman that he also try his luck: "after he began auditioning and recording singers, they would tell others to 'go see Mr. Speir'."²⁵ Romeo Nelson asked Mayo Williams for an audition at the urging of Tampa Red.²⁶

In cities where record companies had facilities, hopeful performers would sometimes simply drop into the studios, as Muriel Longini observed.²⁷ This is the way Henry Townsend started his recording career:

See I heard about some recordin' was gonna be soon and a feller by

²³ Gayle D. Wardlow, "Legends of the Lost (The Story of Henry Speir)," in Back Woods Blues, ed. Simon A. Napier (Bexhill-On-Sea?, U.K.: Blues Unlimited, 1958), p. 27.

²⁴ Leadbitter, "Big Boy Crudup," pp. 16-17.

²⁵ Evans, "Interview with H. C. Speir," p. 119.

²⁶ Tracy Nelson, record notes to Origin Jazz Library OJL-15.

²⁷ "Folk Songs of the Chicago Negroes," Journal of American Folklore, 52 (1939), 97n.

the name of Sam Woolf in 15th and Biddle was handlin' it so I went down and had a test with him and he selected I and Sylvester Palmer.²⁸

But if the performer were far from the recording studios, he could write a letter of application, as one would for other kinds of employment, in the hope that an audition could be arranged. Gussie Nesbitt wrote to Columbia Record Company and they referred him to a local talent scout.²⁹

On at least one occasion, a performer who just happened to be in a recording studio as an onlooker was "discovered" by the record company. Curly Guesnon was watching a recording session with Little Brother Montgomery:

He [Montgomery] had a recording session at the St. Charles Hotel and asked me to come along. So when we got there, he starts making a few numbers and during the break I say, "Brother, I got a little number I wrote, 'Goodbye, Good Luck to You.' You want to play it with me?" He agrees and sits down to play while I sing. Somebody in the studio hears it and offers me ten dollars if I want to record the number. I didn't know about recording and I was broke, so I sang the number and this was the first time I made a record.³⁰

One of the more fascinating ways in which companies found talent was through field trips. A record company would send an A & R man and a team of technicians on a tour of Southern cities to record talent. They would set up their portable equipment in a hotel, ballroom, or other suitable establishment. The first trip was done by Okeh Record Company in 1923³¹ and such excursions were to continue throughout the period.

²⁸ Oliver, Conversation with the Blues, p. 105.

²⁹ Bruce Bastin, Crying for the Carolines (London: Studio Vista, 1971), p. 88. This form of application was also used by white hillbilly performers. For an account of Doc Roberts' application to Gennet Records, see Lisa Feldman, transcriber, "Tapescript: An Interview with Doc Roberts (T7-279)," JEMF Quarterly, 7 (1971), 99.

³⁰ Karl G. zur Heide, Deep South Piano: The Story of Little Brother Montgomery (London: Studio Vista, 1970), p. 93.

³¹ Dixon and Godrich, Recording the Blues, p. 27.

under study.

While on the trips, the companies would record artists whom they had recorded, or at least contacted, previously; they would record some of the talent their scouts had found for them; and they would hold their own auditions to discover new talent. Carl Martin was contacted before the recording unit came to town:

Brunswick had their outfit there, they had come through there. They wrote us letters; if we had any talent, music like that, they were going to put up the studio up in the hotel and for us to come up there. We went up there and we made the pieces. They know when the record's right. They had wax; they made it on wax.³²

But those who were not contacted directly would soon hear that a recording unit was in town. Word-of-mouth was the easiest means of transmitting the news. When A & R man Polk Brockman came into town, he found two hundred hopeful recording stars awaiting him, none of whom had been solicited.³³ Other means were also available to the travelling A & R man. When Ralph Peer came to Bristol, Tennessee, the local newspaper interviewed him, thus giving his recording session free publicity.³⁴ At the same time, Peer ran an announcement in a local record shop's advertisement in the newspaper:

The Victor Co. will have a recording machine in Bristol for 10 days--beginning Monday to record records--Inquire at our store.³⁵

But whether solicited or not, enough talent usually appeared at the recording sessions to make the field trip worthwhile. Performers came, not only

³² Pete Welding, "An Interview with Carl Martin," 78 Quarterly, 1, No. 2 (1968), E313.

³³ Foreman, p. 159.

³⁴ Charles K. Wolfe, "Ralph Peer at Work: The Victor 1927 Bristol Sessions," Old Time Music, No. 5 (Summer 1972), p. 10.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

from the surrounding area, but from considerable distances to make records with these field units. One field unit in Memphis recorded bluesmen from as far away as Dallas, the Mississippi Delta, and even Chicago.³⁶

The auditions held for these prospective blues singers were more formal affairs than was the one held for Crudup. On at least one occasion, H. C. Speir tried out fifty singers in one day. All the performers waited in a hallway and were ushered into a room one at a time, where they would sing their best song before a panel. This panel was composed of twenty persons, most of whom were white, but which also included a few blacks.³⁷ It was at just such a mass auditioning that Skip James was chosen to record—apparently the only one selected out of a room full of performers.³⁸

At this point it is worth noting that, although these field trips may, in some ways, seem similar to excursions by folklorists, there were major differences:

One significant difference between commercial expeditions and folkloric field trips was that the former were much better equipped mechanically. It took academic collectors decades to catch up to the technical standards of Okeh, Columbia, Victor, Edison, and other companies in the 1920's. These firms had the option of setting up portable studios in hotels, lofts, warehouses, and like spots (from Charlotte to Dallas), or of bringing artists to permanent studios. In both settings excellent equipment was used and the industry developed crews with considerable understanding of the habits and styles of folk performers.³⁹

³⁶ Karl G. zur Heide, "Memphis Piano," Blues Unlimited, No. 69 (Jan. 1970), p. 14.

³⁷ J. Nicholas Perls, "Notes on Son House and the Paramount Days," Blues Unlimited, No. 18 (Jan. 1965), p. 4.

³⁸ Peter Guralnick, "Skip James," Living Blues, No. 5 (Summer 1971), p. 13.

³⁹ Archie Green, Only a Miner: Studies in Recorded Coal-Mining Songs, Music in American Life (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois, 1972), p. 48. There were, of course, some folklorists who used quite sophisticated field equipment.

Another major difference was the expectation of the recorder and the performer. A song which would be acceptable to the folklorist might not be acceptable to the A & R man. The implications of this will be discussed later, but the influence of commercialism on the context of race record recording made it a different context from that of folkloristic recording.

Green's point that record companies had the option of recording performers on the spot or sending them to their permanent studios brings up another aspect of the audition. Often a test record would be made of the audition:

[H. C. Speir] often made test recordings of singers in Jackson or elsewhere and sent them to the companies for approval. If the response was favorable, normal procedure was to send the artists north for recording in a studio.⁴⁰

In this way, record company officials at the head office could have the last say as to whether a singer was worth recording.

One other method of finding talent was to make use of one of the types of performing contexts discussed in the last chapter--the blues contest. Several record companies sponsored contests in which the main prize was not money or liquor but the promise of a recording contract. As early as 1922, Black Swan ran a contest in New York which was won by Trixie Smith.⁴¹ Lonnie Johnson recalls that Okeh Records ran a contest every week in St. Louis to find new talent.⁴² Even in the smaller cities, contests were used by talent scouts: J. B. Long held contests for

See John A. Lomax, "Field Experiences with Recording Machines," in Report of the Committee on Folksong of the Popular Literature Section of the Modern Language Association of America, *Southern Folklore Quarterly*, 1, No. 2 (1937), 57-60.

⁴⁰ Evans, "Interview with H. C. Speir," p. 119.

⁴¹ Dixon and Godrich, *Recording the Blues*, p. 14.

⁴² Oliver, *Conversation with the Blues*, p. 115.

both white and black performers in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.⁴³ As late as 1937, such contests were being held, as Willie Moore attests:

I won the contest, a little gold guitar and \$50 which was the first prize. Second prize was \$25 and third was \$10. So I won the first prize and right there I had an audition to go to New York City. J. B. Long sponsored all the business there . . . for the Blue Bird Record Company. I wonned that contest with Blind Boy Fuller's guitar . . . second place went to the Mension (?) Christian Singers . . . that was 1937.⁴⁴

Despite the various methods of finding talent open to the record companies, it was still very much a hit-or-miss operation. It is impossible to tell how many good singers were overlooked; simply because they were in the wrong place at the wrong time. On the other hand, if a professional blues singer truly wished to record, it seems hard to believe, from the evidence, that he would have had a difficult time contacting a record company. Samuel Charters' statement that companies would test anybody who wandered into their studios, no matter how talented they were and regardless of their state of sobriety, may be an exaggeration,⁴⁵ but the record companies did seem quite accessible.

Of course, some performers may have auditioned and, for one reason or another, have failed, even though in another performing context they were quite successful:

Speir states that it was impossible to predict who would be a "good" blues singer, i.e., a commercially successful one on record. Some would "really tear it up" in person but sound terrible on wax, and others vice versa.⁴⁶

⁴³ Bastin, *Crying for the Carolines*, pp. 12-13.

⁴⁴ Kip Lornell, "Willie Moore," *Living Blues*, No. 5 (Summer 1971), p. 15. Ellipses are sic. For further discussion of talent scout contests, see Paul Oliver, "Special Agents: An Introduction to the Recording of Folk Blues in the Twenties," *The Jazz Review*, 2, No. 2 (1959), 21-22.

⁴⁵ Samuel B. Charters, *The Country Blues* (New York: Rinehart, 1959), p. 88.

⁴⁶ Evans, "Interview with H. C. Speir," p. 119.

Undoubtedly, some good performers did not wish to record. Their reasons were many.⁴⁷ Some were suspicious and felt commercially threatened, as did Alan Lomax's informant, Burn-Down:

I knows what you wants. You wants to make records of my singin' an' play 'em over de radio en so-nobody will ever wanten hear me play again 'cause den ev'body'll know de songs dat I knows an' den where am I at? Des' like you says, dey ain' many of us folks what knows de ole songs lef', an' dat's what makes me my livin'. Dat's de way-I sees it--a cole cash proposition, dat loses me money ef I makes any records fuy-yuh. Every minute I picks de geetar, every note I sings, is wuth money to me. How much do I git?⁴⁸

Some were too frightened to record, like Eddie Green:

The owner [of the medicine show] wanted him [Noah Lewis] to go to Memphis to cut a record. I was at the record session, but I was scared of the recording device, so I would have nothing to do with the recording.⁴⁹

Some simply did not like to travel, such as King Solomon Hill, who only reluctantly took the trip to Wisconsin to record.⁵⁰

Those performers who had full-time employment may have been reluctant to leave their jobs, such as Bubba Brown who "was approached several times . . . about making commercial phonograph records, but he consistently refused because he would have to miss work in order to travel to the studio in the North."⁵¹ Some artists who did record did so only re-

⁴⁷ Alan Lomax, "'Sinful' Songs of the Southern Negro: Experiences Collecting Secular Folk-Music," *Southwest Review*, 19 (1934), 108-09. Similar sentiments were expressed by the early vaudeville performers: see Ann Charters, *Nobody: The Story of Bert Williams* (London: Macmillan, 1970), p. 64.

⁴⁸ Bengt Olsson, *Memphis Blues and Jug Bands* (London: Studio Vista, 1970), p. 61.

⁴⁹ Wardlow, "King Solomon Hill," p. 8. There has been some question as to whether Wardlow's sources of information for this article are reliable.

⁵⁰ David Evans, "Bubba Brown: Folk Poet," *Mississippi Folklore Register*, 7 (1973), 18.

luctantly, such as Kokomo Arnold:

I never wanted to make records. The first time I was dragged by force into the studio. No, I've always preferred a quiet, simple life, far removed from the vanities and tumult of this world.⁵¹

and some who willingly recorded the first time, may have become discouraged or disenchanted with recording, such as Skip James:

Why'd I quit? I was so disappointed. Wouldn't you be disappointed, man? I cut twenty-six sides for Paramount in Grafton, Wisconsin. I didn't get paid but forty dollars. That's not doing very good. Wouldn't you be disappointed?⁵²

But for every singer who was reluctant to record there were probably many like Brownie McGhee, who was so happy and excited about the prospect of making a record that he "would have gone for the trip" alone.⁵³

For those who lived far from the recording studios, the trip to the big city could indeed be a source of excitement, or, conversely, a traumatic experience. Quite often a group of performers would drive to the studio together, which would not only save gasoline, but make the excursion more enjoyable. Mississippi Matilda remembers travelling to a New Orleans session with Sam and Bo Chatmon, Walter Vinson, Willie Harris, Robert Hill, and her performer husband, Eugene "Sonny Boy Nelson" Powell, among others.⁵⁴ Sometimes the local talent scout would drive a group to the sessions himself, as may have been the case with King Solomon Hill,⁵⁵ or simply supply travel money to the performers, as Son

⁵¹ Leon Terjanian, "Kokomo Arnold," Blues-Link, No. 2 (Oct.-Nov. 1973), p. 28. In the light of this statement, however, one wonders why Arnold made over forty records.

⁵² Peter Guralnick, Feel Like Going Home: Portraits in Blues & Rock'n'Roll (New York: Outerbridge and Dienstfrey, 1971), p. 82.

⁵³ Oliver, "Special Agents," p. 25.

⁵⁴ Bob Eagle and Steve LaVere, "Hard Working Woman: Mississippi Matilda," Living Blues, No. 8 (Spring 1972), p. 7.

⁵⁵ Wardlow, "King Solomon Hill," p. 8.

House recalls:

So he [Art Laibly] told Charley [Patton] then, he wanted me to come with him in the next recordings. And so, he left \$100. That was for cigarettes and food, and pay Wheeler Ford a little something, 'cause he had the car. And he [Laibly] went on [to Texas]. So, it was about three days after then 'fore we lit out on our way to Grafton.⁵⁶

For the performer who was not used to travelling, or who disliked big cities, the trip could be an unpleasant experience. Homesickness, fear of failure in the studio, or the hard work required to please the record company officials could all prove slightly traumatic to the rural artist; especially if it was the first recording session for him. The following letter from Big Maceo to his wife indicates some of the hardships of the performer away from home:

My dear loving wife,

I arrive in Chicago at 3pm and arrive safely. Baby we will record Tuesday Melrose said and dont you worry Just be a good girl because I am a good boy listen baby I real have mis you it look like I have bin here 2 weeks allready listen darling Mis Tampa and all said just take it easy everything is going to be allright and Tampa said it wont be long now So baby Dont think hard of me for not writing more but we are so busy I and Tampa untill I am worn out. So you just be sweet untill your husburn come home it is from the one who love you your husburn. M. Merriweather

P.S. Write soon and let me no just how you are getting along your baby M. M.⁵⁷

But for the seasoned blues recording star, the trip was not only pleasant, but possibly lucrative. For example, Blind Boy Fuller took full advantage of his trip to New York to record:

He would never play on stage, but was quite happy to play wherever he stopped on his way north to record. One day following their arrival, in New York to record for Decca, Willie Trice vividly remembers being woken about 11 a.m. by Fuller. . . Fuller was impatient to get out on the New York streets--by no means unfamiliar

⁵⁶ Nick Perls, "Son House Interview--Part One," 78 Quarterly, 1 No. 1 (1967), p. 5.

⁵⁷ Mike Rowe, "Tuff Luck Blues," Blues Unlimited, No. 106 (Feb.-Mar. 1974), p. 5.

to him by this time--and he dragged Willie out of bed to take him down, where he played for about an hour before coming back to the hotel.⁵⁸

When the performer arrived in the city to record, he did not, for the most part, simply walk into the studio and start singing. It is a widely held misconception that the recorded performance was spontaneous, but although there were undoubtedly instances in which the performer recorded a song without prior preparation, most singers needed time to rehearse their songs. Certainly, the vaudeville singers, who were used to highly structured and formal performances, would not go into a studio unprepared. In reference to Bessie Smith, Paul Oliver writes: "the thoroughness with which she prepared her recordings and the apparent spontaneity of her recorded work is all the more remarkable when it becomes evident that she rehearsed every turn of phrase and studied every pause."⁵⁹

David Evans intimates that Tommy Johnson and Ishmon Bracey were ready to record as soon as they arrived, but a delay in recording was put to good use by rehearsing their material:

On 2 February 1928, a Greyhound bus pulled into Memphis containing Tommy Johnson, Ishmon Bracey, Charlie McCoy and Rosie Mae Moore. . . . Since some of the other musicians were ahead of them, they spent the day practicing.⁶⁰

Willy Trice recalls that the A & R man made him rehearse his material until he "had it word-perfect."⁶¹ Big Bill Broonzy rehearsed for two

⁵⁸ Bastin, Crying for the Carolines, pp. 13-14.

⁵⁹ Bessie Smith (1959; rpt. New York: A.S. Barnes, 1961), p. 47.

⁶⁰ Tommy Johnson (London: Studio Vista, 1971), p. 47.

⁶¹ Bruce Bastin and Pete Lowry, "'Tricks Ain't Workin' No More': Blues From the South Part 6," Blues Unlimited, No. 72 (May 1970), p. 5.

weeks before his first recording session,⁶² and Tampa Red and Tom Dorsey would systematically practice every day for a week before recording a new song.⁶³ Likewise, Will Shade, leader of the Memphis Jug Band, was a perfectionist and demanded that all performances by his group be well-rehearsed.⁶⁴

As professionals these singers had certain standards which they set for themselves, and these standards could not be adequately met without some form of preparation; especially when they were confronted with the permanence of their performance on wax. This general lack of spontaneity sheds some light on the method by which singers composed their songs, but this will be dealt with in Chapter X.

When the performer was ready to record, he was faced with a type of context which may have seemed very strange to him. Especially if the singer was recording for the first time, he might have felt nervous or uneasy, and this was often compounded by the discomfort inherent in the recording process. Even waiting to record could be uncomfortable and tiresome. White hillbilly singer, Jack Jackson, recounts his experience, which was no doubt similar to that of many black performers:

That was the most miserable day . . . I was supposed to be the first one on the list, at 8:00 Monday morning. But for some reason they didn't get their equipment in. It was just a vacated store building, I think it had probably been used for a cream station: a little old brick building. It had a section about 10 by 12 in front, then a wall, and a little window there kind of like a bank teller window and a door you could go through. It rained all day and the whole front was jammed with people. More of them were curious than wanted to make re-

⁶² William Broonzy, *Big Bill Blues: William Broonzy's Story*, ed. Yannick Bruynoghe (1955; rpt. New York: Oak Publications, 1964), p. 46.

⁶³ Stephen Calt, record notes to Yazoo L-1041.

⁶⁴ Olsson, *Memphis Blues*, p. 27.

cords; I didn't recognize many groups; in fact some of them left . . . and I wish I had, and had come back rested. I stood there without as much as a cup of coffee from 8:00 in the morning until 4:00 in the evening. And every few minutes a man would run and stick his head out and say, "Don't you leave; we'll be ready in a minute."⁶⁵

John Hurt also remembered the long wait: "Every once in a while, one of us would get up and try to look into where the recording was going on, but we were shooed back away from the place."⁶⁶

Once inside the recording room, the discomfort, if anything, got worse. Willie Trice recalls that the room was stiflingly hot because all the windows had to be kept shut to keep out extraneous noise.⁶⁷ In the first five years of race recording a horn was used, rather than a microphone, to capture the sound of the singer, which meant that the performer had to maintain a rigid, uncomfortable position when singing. Bill Broonzy recalls,

They had my head in a horn of some kind and I had to pull my head out of the horn to read the words and back in it to sing. And they had Thomas [his accompanist] put on a pillar about two feet high and they kept on telling us to play like we would if we was at home or at a party, and they kept on telling us to relax . . .⁶⁸

White banjoist, Raymond D. Hundley, similarly recalls the annoyance of having to maintain a set position:

Whenever he [Ralph Peer] get you where he wants you, he put a chalk mark, crayon mark, on the floor. Well, you stay within that mark; you don't get out of that.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Charles Wolfe, "Jack Jackson: Portrait of an Early Country Singer," JEMF Quarterly, 9 (1973), p. 144.

⁶⁶ Lawrence Cohn, "Mississippi John Hurt," Sing Out! (Nov. 1964), rpt. as record notes to Piedmont PLP-13157.

⁶⁷ Bryce Bastin and Pete Lowry, "'Tricks Ain't Workin' No More': Blues From the South-East Part 3," Blues Unlimited, No. 69 (Jan. 1970), p. 8.

⁶⁸ Big Bill Blues, p. 47.

⁶⁹ Tony Russell and Janet Kerr, "Kelly Harrell & the Virginia Ramblers," Old Time Music, No. 2 (Autumn 1971), p. 9.

In 1925, Bell Laboratories invented electric recording,⁷⁰ which meant that performers could sing into a microphone instead of into a horn. This allowed the singer much more freedom of movement and thus more comfort when recording:

When the Thorobreds [White hillbilly group] made records the recorder [A & R man] would put them into position. They used to have to sit on big, high stools--"our feet wouldn't touch the ground"--and play through the old time horn recording. Finally they got electric recording, which made things much better and easier. There were just four microphones and you could stand up. Doc [Roberts] generally stands when he's fiddling, so the change had an effect on instrumentation.⁷¹

It was not until the late 1920's or early 1930's that all the record companies switched to the electrical system, but even this change did not necessarily relieve the artist's discomfort and did nothing to calm a nervous beginner. For the first-time recorder, the matter of positioning only worsened the performer's tense state, as John Hurt recalls:

It was really something. I sat on a chair and they pushed the microphone right up close to my mouth and told me that I couldn't move after they had found the right position. I had to keep my head absolutely still. Oh, I was nervous, and my neck was sore for days after.⁷²

According to Paul Oliver, "Victoria Spivey had to make three 'takes' of 'Black Snake Blues' because she was 'scared to death', and burst into tears on hearing her own record."⁷³ Walter Davis also recalls his state of nervousness the first time he stepped into a studio:

Then I got ready to go to New York. Why I was a little frightened, but after they got me in the studio they had taken me up and I was sittin' there lookin' out the window--I think on the thirty-fifth floor of Victor's building--just touching the piano along. So

⁷⁰ Dixon and Godrich, Recording the Blues, p. 35.

⁷¹ Feldman, "Interview with Doc Roberts," pp. 100-01.

⁷² Cohn, "Mississippi John Hurt."

⁷³ "Special Agents," p. 24.

after a while a different kind of feelin' come over me: So I told the engineers I was ready and they turned me on . . . I was kinda a frightened feller. I couldn't play--I was tremblin' too much!⁷⁴

Just as performers had their problems adjusting to the recording context, the engineers and technicians had their own problems in preparing the singers to record. There was, of course, the adjusting of the horns and positioning of the singers. For singer-guitar players there must have been two separate horns--one for the instrument and one for the voice--although an exact description is lacking. This was certainly the case when electrical recording was done. Charley Patton had both a voice and instrument microphone when recording.⁷⁵

Acoustics and sound levels were also a problem then, just as they are today. Often the performers would sing too loud and break the sensitive diaphragm which transmitted the sound. A & R man, H. C. Speir, learned to anticipate especially loud or high singing and would compensate for it by turning down the recording levels.⁷⁶ Both Tommy Johnson and Charlie Burse had the habit of tapping their feet while playing ⁷⁷ (as did, no doubt, many others), so the engineers would stifle this tapping by placing a pillow under the foot of the artist. The bluesmen's instruments also created problems for the engineers, as Samuel Charters points out in reference to jug bands:

In Memphis the engineers had a terrible time handling the jug instruments. The heavy vibration produced a very wide groove that was hard to master successfully. They finally had to put the jug

⁷⁴ Oliver, Conversation with the Blues, pp. 107-08.

⁷⁵ Fahey, p. 25.

⁷⁶ Evans, "Interview with H. C. Speir," p. 119.

⁷⁷ Evans, Tommy Johnson, pp. 47-48; and Olsson Memphis Blues, p. 29, respectively.

on the dead side of the microphone so that it was often almost inaudible.⁷⁸

Even if all the technical equipment were properly functioning and sound levels and acoustics had been well readied, the performer himself might not be prepared. James Stump Johnson tells how a night on the town ruined a recording session:

. . . we were supposed to prepare our material for naming the records but we didn't 'cause we were enjoyin' ourselves seein' the sights of New York and we forgot our material. So we slept in the open air that night and the next day I was hoarse and couldn't talk and couldn't sing and we got lost . . .⁷⁹

The wise A & R man must have instructed the performers to be moderate in their pre-recording activities, whatever they might be, so that the singers would be in as good a condition as possible when it came time to record. White hillbilly artist, Welby Toomey, was told not to eat too much before recording or his stomach would expand and he wouldn't be able to sing well.⁸⁰

A strange place a long way from home, the nervousness and discomfort of performing in an unfamiliar context, and all the confusion of the recording process itself must have had a deleterious effect on both the singer and his performance. The A & R men realized this, and they tried their best to counteract the effects of the recording context by creating an informal atmosphere in the studio, setting a favourable mood for the artist to perform in, and generally trying to establish good rapport with the singer.

⁷⁸ The Country Blues (New York: Rinehart, 1959), p. 89.

⁷⁹ Oliver, Conversation with the Blues, p. 110.

⁸⁰ Archie Green and Norm Cohen, "Tapescript Interview with Welby Toomey (T7-197)," JEMF Quarterly, 5 (1969), 64.

One of the advantages of the field recording units was that the singer was not so far removed from his environment and the temporary nature of the recording studio, in a hotel room or wherever, lent a certain informality to the sessions:

[Frank] Walker's emphasis was on informality: in surroundings familiar to them, he reasoned, the instrumentalists and singers whom he found were likely to feel more relaxed and at ease; their performances, correspondingly would be less strained and more impressive.⁸¹

But it took more than the location to make the recording situation relaxed and informal. The good A & R man would know enough about performer psychology to be able to set the proper mood for recording. Art Satherley was apparently a master in this respect and his description of setting the mood for a group of gospel singers is indicative of his approach:

I didn't just say, "Sing this and go out and have a drink somewhere." I spent my time in that studio getting them ready for the people of the world. . . . When I spoke to those Negroes, I would talk to them; I would tell them something about my background as an immigrant. I would tell them what we had to expect. Then when I found that I had these Negroes in a feeling, I would ask, "Before we sing this spiritual . . . which one of you have lost a loved one in the last year or so?" And one would step forward. Then I would say to the fellow that had some preaching experience, "Just say a little short prayer before we start preaching." This was not an act on my part. It was the simplicity of a simplicity to be an honest man, to give them what they wanted back. And the only way to get it back was to get what they felt in their souls. How many recording men know that?⁸²

Of course too much informality could also interfere with the recording process. During a recording session with the Memphis Jug Band, talent scout Charlie Williamson's biased attitude nearly ruined the recording:

⁸¹ Foreman, p. 161.

⁸² Norm Cohen, "'I'm a Record Man'--Uncle Art Satherley Reminisces," JEMF Quarterly, 8 (1972), 19. Ellipses are sic.

Charlie strolled in, took off his derby and put it down on the piano. There was a hollow bang when he put it down and Son [Will Shade] was sure the test was ruined. He looked at the control room window and [Ralph] Peer was standing there laughing at the whole scene. Victor issued "Stingy Woman Blues" anyway, with the incidental noise by Charlie Williamson.⁸³

The major means, however, of keeping the performer from being nervous was not some form of psychology; liquor was supplied in ample amounts to numb any potential fears the performer may have had. Ishmon Bracey stated that Victor Record Company supplied Tommy Johnson and himself with liquor, but only enough to take the hoarseness out of their throats; they were quite sober when they made their records.⁸⁴ H. C. Speir, however, recalls that Johnson would not record without a liberal amount of canned heat inside of him first.⁸⁵ These two accounts may not necessarily conflict, since Speir and Bracey may have had radically different ideas about what constituted a "small" amount of liquor and their definitions of sobriety may have been quite far apart.

Although the use of liquor may have helped in the recording of a singer, it was not a solution tailored to the individual habits of each performer. This point is clearly raised by James Stump Johnson:

I never drank anything in my life and they thought that all blues singers like to drink which I was one that never did, and they gave us two or three fifths of whiskey . . . I taken a drink and with that the drink went to my head and I was high.⁸⁶

Bill Broonzy had the same experience when the company officials misjudged his capacity for liquor.⁸⁷ This, to some extent, points out the stereo-

⁸³ Charters, Country Blues, pp. 109-10.

⁸⁴ Evans, Tommy Johnson, p. 47.

⁸⁵ Evans, "Interview with H. C. Speir," p. 119.

⁸⁶ Oliver, Conversation with the Blues, p. 110.

⁸⁷ Big Bill Blues, p. 47.

typic view that many white A & R men must have had about blues singers, and perhaps about blacks in general. A teetotaling blues singer, even today, seems a contradiction to many people. But this stereotype extends beyond the black performer to include performers in general; hillbilly artist, Bernice Coleman, recalls that the Columbia A & R man had "liquor there by the barrel" when he recorded.⁸⁸

The artist himself might have wished to conform to this stereotype even if he was an abstainer. Edith Johnson almost decided to drink at her session, but had second thoughts:

Well the first time I recorded I saw the people were drinkin' and I thought you had to drink to record. But this time I didn't want to drink because I wanted to see how it would sound myself. And bby, guess what! It was a good record, and I made the company a lot of money.⁸⁹

A story by jazz trumpeter, Rex Stewart, indicates that "too much of a good thing" could indeed ruin a session, especially when everyone, including the technicians and A & R men, indulged themselves:

... somebody came up with the bright idea of continuing with iced gin. That was the beginning of the end, because the producer took a milk bottle full of iced gin to the sound engineer, whereupon the two of them proceeded to reminisce about earlier records they had made together.

As they talked on and on, the musicians began to feel the effects of the hot room and the cold gin. One by one they draped themselves on chairs or wherever they could find a spot to stretch out and go to sleep. The next thing we knew, it was daylight. As the fellows started to wake up, the producer was seen holding up the engineer by his snores alone. It seems that somebody had been a bit heavy with the ether in that batch of gin. Anyway, after coffee, we staggered through the other two sides and limped home to finish sleeping off our recording session.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Norm Cohen, "Notes On Some Old Time Musicians from Princeton, West Virginia," JEMF Quarterly, 8 (1972), 97.

⁸⁹ Oliver, Conversation with the Blues, p. 111.

⁹⁰ Rex Stewart, Jazz Masters of the Thirties (New York: Macmillan, and London: Collier-Macmillan, 1972), p. 31.

It is impossible to know, now, whether a performer was intoxicated when he recorded, and whether this was a natural or unnatural occurrence in terms of his other performing contexts. Certainly at a juke joint, house party, or night club, liquor was abundant, but we don't know to what extent performers partook in the drinking. We also cannot determine if liquor was the only stimulant supplied by the record company. Noah Lewis was generally high on cocaine when he recorded,⁹¹ and marijuana, then legal, was common among the more sophisticated vaudeville and jazz singers,⁹² but there is no evidence that record companies supplied either of these drugs.

At this point, it might be best to look at the technical process of putting sound to record in those days. The intent here is not to give a scientific explanation of how it was done, but rather a layman's view of the process. The performer probably had little idea of how his voice was actually transferred to disc; he didn't need to know in order to sing the blues. Son House's vague notion of the recording process may well be typical:

ABOUT HOW MANY RECORDS DID YOU MAKE DOWN THERE? Three I think it was . . . three. They was on a something like "alumastick" what he had . . . called it, was made outa aluminum, 'cause you play them with a sassafrack needle. CACTUS NEEDLE? Yeah, they called them sassafrack. We used to gather that stuff and make tea with it, good tea. SASSAFRASS? Yeah, sassafrax.⁹³

The A & R man had a much clearer idea of the process, and Art Satherley's description should suffice for the purposes of this study:

⁹¹ Bengt Olsson, "Biography," record notes to Herwin 208.

⁹² Albertson, Bessie, pp. 188-89.

⁹³ Nick Perls, "Son House Interview--Part One," 78 Quarterly, 1, No. 1 (1967), 60. Ellipses are sic.

The original wax master was made of beeswax and stearic acid. These wax masters were made in Connecticut by a man named Matthews [for Paramount Record Company]; all steel needles were also made there. The masters were made plain, with a hole, and shipped in fitted tin cans packed with cotton. They were refrigerated until required for use, at which time one fellow would scrape the master with a razor blade until the surface was like a mirror. Then the masters would be put in a warming cabinet until they had warmed up to the appropriate temperature. The styli were also warmed, because they were made of diamond or sapphire and were very brittle. In general, they never played back a wax master, except occasionally to hear how they were doing. These masters were immediately re-shaved and re-used. Three wax masters representing three successive takes were made. They were all sent to New York or Chicago for processing. When Uncle Art returned from a month or six weeks of recording, he'd have three or four hundred test pressings waiting for him. His next task would be to listen to them all and make his catalog selections . . .

Each wax master was copper plated in a copper sulfate bath. When the plating was completed, the master was removed from the baths and the copper was stripped away. Then the wax man would take the wax master, re-polish it with his razor blade, and ready it for use again. The copper master was dipped in graphite and used to obtain a mother. Generally several mothers were made from a single master; and from each mother many stampers were made. Thus, for a popular record, twenty or thirty stampers would be made, and as many presses could be put to work at the one time. A good stamper was usable for four to six hundred pressings. The copper masters were kept in a vault. A large company like Victor or Columbia probably had 100 tons of copper tied up in masters, Uncle Art stated. Each one is treated at least once annually with a certain type of silicone to make sure the grooves are preserved.⁹⁴

Once these records were produced, their distribution was very widespread. It might be thought that, given the relatively poor economic conditions of most blacks in the United States at that time, there would have been few families who could afford to buy records, much less own a record player. This, however, is not the case at all. Despite their poverty, blacks could find enough money to be able to afford a gramophone. Charles S. Johnson reports that out of 612 families in Macon.

⁹⁴ Norm Cohen, "I'm a Record Man," pp. 20-21. This process is also described, complete with illustrations, in "Perpetuating Our 'Hill-Billy' Harmonies," *The Knoxville News Sentinel*, 13 April 1930, rpt. in Charles K. Wolfe, "Early Country Music in Knoxville: The Brunswick Sessions & the End of an Era," *Old Time Music*, No. 12 (Spring 1974), pp. 24-25.

County, Alabama, seventy-six owned record players.⁹⁵ and Dane Yorke states that in "the delta of Mississippi it is not unusual to find a ramshackle carpetless darky shanty boasting a bright red mahogany \$250 Victrola."⁹⁶

Blues singers themselves often recall the first record player in their homes. In 1924, Sonny Terry's father bought a hand-wound phonograph,⁹⁷ and John Lee Hooker remembers his first gramophone with fondness:

We had a wind-up record player. Nothing like today, no electricity. You wind it up and put the record on and you play it. I was a small kid then. I remember those three: Blind Blake, Blind Lemon and Charley Patton.⁹⁸

That the poor should have access to the media is not really very surprising. In many cultures in North America, the record player, radio, or television is seen more as a necessity than as a luxury. In Newfoundland, for example, where the economic conditions of the people were probably equal to, if not worse than, those of the blacks, radios and record players have been common household items for at least the last forty years.⁹⁹ I have personally been in the house of a Micmac family

⁹⁵ Shadow of the Plantation (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1934), p. 184. Arthur F. Raper, Preface to Peasantry: A Tale of Two Black Belt Counties, Studies in American Negro Life (1936; rpt. New York: Atheneum, 1968), p. 66, reports that nineteen percent of the black families in two Georgia counties he surveyed owned phonographs.

⁹⁶ "The Rise and Fall of the Phonograph," American Mercury, 27 (Sept. 1932), 8.

⁹⁷ Marshall Stearns, "Sonny Terry and His Blues," in The Art of Jazz: Essays on the Nature and Development of Jazz, ed. Martin T. Williams (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1959), p. 9.

⁹⁸ John Lee Hooker and Peter J. Welding, "Taped Interview--February 3, 1964: John Lee Hooker Talks to Peter J. Welding," Blues Unlimited Collectors Classics, No. 2 (Sept. 1964), p. 2.

⁹⁹ Michael Taft, "'That's Two More Dollars': Jimmy Linegar's Success with Country Music in Newfoundland," Folklore Forum, 7 (1974), 100-01, 107-08.

on the isolated South Coast of Newfoundland which included a record player and a new, large colour television, despite the obvious poverty of that family.¹⁰⁰

Perhaps the best indication that record players were widespread among blacks are the sales statistics. In just a few weeks, the 1920 recording of "Crazy Blues" by Mamie Smith sold 75,000 copies in Harlem, New York.¹⁰¹ LeRoi Jones tells of black workers lining up after work to buy the latest records.¹⁰² In short, race records were not directed towards nor bought by the upper-class elite of black society, but by the average middle or lower class black.

How did record companies distribute their records? To a great extent they used agents to retail their product. These were usually shop owners, and, as an advertisement for Black Swan states, any sort of shop owner would do:

We want live agents everywhere! Music stores, drug stores, furniture dealers, news stands, cigar stores, manicuring and hairdressing parlors, confectionary stores, shoe shining parlors, delicatessen shops and all other places of business catering to retail trade . . .¹⁰³

As early as 1922, Okeh had retail outlets for race records in Kentucky, Tennessee, and Alabama, as well as in most of the major cities of the North.¹⁰⁴ It took Paramount Record Company only one year of advertising

¹⁰⁰ This observation was made on a trip to Conne River, Newfoundland, with Robert Kane, in the Autumn of 1974.

¹⁰¹ Foreman, p. 58.

¹⁰² Blues People: Negro Music in White America (New York: William Morrow, 1963), p. 101.

¹⁰³ From a 1923 advertisement, rpt. in Dixon and Godrich, Recording the Blues, p. 16.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

before they had thousands of dealers competing with Columbia and Victor; their records were even sold at house parties in the North and the South.¹⁰⁵ Some of the biggest sellers, such as records by Ma Rainey and Blind Lemon Jefferson were sold from Nova Scotia to Florida.¹⁰⁶

Besides the agents, the record companies had a very large mail-order business which was carried out through advertisements in black newspapers:

In 1922 and 1923, the recording companies were spending more and more money on advertising, and through record shops in the Northern cities, they were advertising that any of their records could be purchased by mail. The mail-order business was much more important in the country areas in the 1920's than they are today, and this mail-order business was very profitable.¹⁰⁷

There were also more unusual means of selling records. In St. Louis, the Deluxe Music Shop hired an airplane to shower a baseball crowd with leaflets announcing the latest blues releases.¹⁰⁸ An even stranger technique is the following:

They [Leroy Carr and Scrapper Blackwell] appeared in Louisville, Nashville, and Cincinnati, where Blackwell recalled that they sat in the show window of a music store faking a performance to one of their latest records, mouthing the lyrics, while a loudspeaker blared the recording to all who passed by or stood gaping through the glass.¹⁰⁹

But despite the wide distribution and enormous sales of some of the records, the performers themselves made little from them in the way of royalties or flat fees. The amount of money paid out by the companies ranged considerably, depending upon who the performer was and the financial

¹⁰⁵ Norm Cohen, "I'm a Record Man," p. 18.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 19. A Jefferson recording recently turned up in a junk store in St. John's, Newfoundland.

¹⁰⁷ Charters, Country Blues, p. 48. Paul K. Edwards, The Southern Urban Negro as a Consumer (1932; rpt. New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), p. 185, writes that 18.7% of the Chicago Defender's advertising was for race records.

¹⁰⁸ Paul Oliver, "Black and Blues," Observer, 27 July 1969, p. 18.

¹⁰⁹ Anon., record notes to Columbia C-30496.

condition of the company. Perhaps the lowest fee ever paid was to John Henry Howard, who received only thirty dollars for the nine sides which he made for Gennet.¹¹⁰ By contrast, the great Bessie Smith, as the height of her career, received two hundred dollars per side.¹¹¹

But even Bessie Smith did not live off her record earnings. As with most vaudeville singers, her main source of income was from stage shows and night club appearances. As Derrick Stewart-Baxter put it, record payments were only "jam on the bread" to the vaudeville singers.¹¹² The same could be said for blues singers in general. It is doubtful that any performer lived strictly on his record earnings for any length of time.

On occasion, the singer might be cheated out of the small amount he did earn from the records. Carl Martin recalls,

We made the record and that fellow, he told me, he said, "Now in a month you'll hear from me." When the record came out, I heard it on the vendor, but my name wasn't on it.¹¹³

The singer could even be worse off, however, if, as Oliver writes, the company "employed the device of causing the singer to 'pay off the debt.' he owes through having 'wrecked' the recording machine by the loudness of his playing."¹¹⁴

The year 1942 has been termed the "end of an era"¹¹⁵ for this system of recording blues singers. In that year, J. C. Petrillo, the president

¹¹⁰ Dixon and Godrich, Recording the Blues, p. 54.

¹¹¹ Albertson, Bessie, p. 98.

¹¹² Ma Rainey and the Classic Blues Singers (London: Studio Vista, 1970), p. 58.

¹¹³ Welding, "Interview with Carl Martin," p. C301.

¹¹⁴ "Special Agents," p. 23.

¹¹⁵ Dixon and Godrich, Recording the Blues, p. 103.

of the American Federation of Musicians, ordered a ban on all recording, because he was worried about the effects of juke boxes on live music.¹¹⁶ This, along with the rations on shellac due to World War II, forced most of the race record series to fold, and few of the hundreds of artists who had recorded before the war could be found in the record catalogues after the war. In explaining why their discography ends with the year 1942, Godrich and Dixon indicate the importance of that year to the race record industry:

The listing ends at 1942 for several reasons. After the war, styles of performance changed rather radically, and so did methods of recording and issuance. Far more obscurity surrounds the operations of the many small companies issuing records for Negro audiences in the late forties than for those of the twenties and thirties; and the advent of tape-recording, with multi-recording, splicing together of parts from different takes, and so on, made recording and issuance a far more subtle and complex affair. It thus seems reasonable to call a break sometime in the early forties; 1942, the beginning of the Petrillo ban on recording, is then a convenient year.¹¹⁷

After the war, the recording context of blues performance became different from what it had been in the twenties and thirties.

In what sense can we speak of performer-audience interaction in the performance context just described? There is no audience as such; the bluesman is singing into a horn or at a microphone in a small, empty room. He might be performing to the technicians behind the glass partition, but his view of them could well be obscured by the paraphernalia of recording equipment. The technicians were less than an ideal audience for the singer, since they would be too preoccupied with the mechanics of recording to give the singer much conscious feedback. Any feedback they

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 99; and Roland Gelatt, The Fabulous Phonograph: From to Stereo, rev. ed. (New York: Appleton-Century, 1954), pp. 278-81.

¹¹⁷ Blues & Gospel Records, pp. 5-6.

did give the performer would have to be visual, since the nature of the recording studio precluded any vocal contact between the performer and the technicians.

If the performer were one member of a group, such as a jug band, he might well be getting feedback from the other members of the group, but it would not be the same as in other contexts. Each member of the group would be preoccupied with his own fixed position in front of his own horn or microphone. The interaction of members of a band in any case is not the same as that between a performer and a clearly defined non-performing audience.

There is, however, an imaginary audience. The performer knows that the song he is singing will be listened to by many audiences, once the record is distributed. He knows that in order to be successful, he must please this imaginary audience. Whether, as he sings, he consciously visualizes an audience (remember the instructions given to Broonzy to imagine himself at a party), or whether the idea of this audience is only in the back of his mind, he must try to perform according to what he thinks this audience's expectations will be. This same thought is going through the mind of the A & R man and other record company officials who must judge whether the performance will meet the expectations of the black record-buying public.

Of course, the performer does not receive immediate audience feedback, but he does receive delayed, or indirect, feedback from his auditors. If he has not been successful, or has not met the expectations of his audience, his records will not sell and he will not be asked back by the record companies. This situation is not so different from that of the poor performer who finds fewer and fewer invitations to play at cabarets or house parties. The recording artist may also receive more direct feedback when

he meets those who have bought and listened to his record. They may be positive or negative about his performance, or may make suggestions or even requests, all of which the performer can incorporate into his next recording performance.

In this performing context, the singer must try to give a high-quality performance. His incentive to give a high-quality performance is, first and foremost, monetary, since if he doesn't please the record company officials, he will not have his contract renewed. But the singer might also be aware that his record is, in essence, a calling card or a sample of his performance style. If his recorded performance is enjoyed by the public, his live performances will be more eagerly anticipated by his record-buyers. The singer, therefore, must work hard, both in rehearsing and performing his blues, in order to please the imaginary audience he sees before him in the recording studio.

VII THE EFFECTS OF CONTEXT ON BLUES PERFORMANCE AND REPERTOIRE

In the last two chapters we have examined some of the different contexts in which the blues was performed, and have noted the various ways in which the performer and the audience interact in these several contexts. The type of context and, consequently, the type of audience-performer interaction greatly affect how the blues is performed by the singer and how the singer limits, expands, or changes the contents of his blues songs and his blues repertoire in general. In this chapter, we will examine how the contexts of the blues affect four specific qualities of a song's performance: the physical presence and actions of the performer, the length and duration of his song, the content of the lyrics of his song, and the performer's repertoire of blues songs.

Being a performer, the bluesman is largely concerned with how to entertain his audience. This means, of course, that he must take great pains to see that his playing and singing are suitable to the audience and to the context in which he is performing. He must also be aware of his overall stage-presence. His audience, in most contexts, not only hears the performer, but sees him as well. The bluesman, then, is not only a singer but also an "actor" in the literal sense of the word.

As might be expected, in the contexts where audience-performer interaction is low, or where the audience's expectations of the performer are not great, there is less overt "acting" on the part of the blues singer, than when he is in a high audience-performer interaction context, or when his audience has high expectations of him. In terms of stance while performing, this means that at a house party or juke joint, where the performer is simply supplying background music for dancing, he may sit

in a chair or slouch in a corner while performing without feeling the need to call attention to himself or to the music he is playing. When the performer is at the centre of his audience's attention, however, or where the singer must please his audience with a high-quality performance, the bluesman must make every attempt to keep himself in the spotlight. Simply sitting in a chair and singing will not sell tickets to a circus or stage show; he must be animated in his performance.

Kenneth S. Goldstein noted this difference in the physical performance of one of his informants:

For example, a traditional Negro folksinger from whom I had collected performed almost offhandedly when singing in his kitchen for his own family and friends, and very animatedly when singing before street audiences for money.¹

On the street, in a night club, or on a stage, the performer may make sharp or contortionate movements with his body to capture the attention of his audience, or he may act out the parts of the song or do a dance while singing.

At the 1972 Mariposa Folk Festival in Toronto, pianist Roosevelt Sykes, when on stage, rocked his body to the rhythm of the music, continually looked around him to establish eye contact with the audience, made sweeping motions with his hands as he ran down the keyboard, and pointed above with one hand while he played with the other whenever the word "sky" or "heaven" was sung. On at least two occasions, Booker White hopped on stage while Sykes was playing and danced and clapped his hands. These animated displays were in sharp contrast to the other blues musicians, who could be seen unobtrusively hunched over their instruments, re-

¹ A Guide for Field Workers in Folklore (Hatboro, Pa.: Folklore Associates, and London: Herbert Jenkins, 1964), p. 98n.

hearing for their stage appearances. The difference in performing style was a difference in performing contexts.

In highly animated performances the singers often perform what might be called "stunts" with their instruments. It is reported that Tommy Johnson would "throw the guitar in the air, flip it, straddle it, stand, it on the floor, sit on it, lie on the floor with it and play it behind his head, all without missing a note." In addition, he could perform the truly amazing feat of standing on the guitar while playing it with his toes.² Charley Patton would dance around his guitar, bang it while he played, and, like Johnson, play the guitar behind his head.³ Playing the guitar behind one's head seems to have been a common stunt in the repertoire of bluesmen; Blind Blake also performed this feat,⁴ and at the Mariposa Folk Festival Booker White included this stunt in several of his performances.

Gus Cannon was a master of animated performance because of his long career with medicine shows--a context in which the performer is very much the centre of his audience's attention. While on stage, he

would suddenly swing the head of the banjo out over the heads of the people standing by the wagon. He was still holding it with his left hand, and as the banjo swung back he would change the chord with his left hand and pick the strings with his right; then swing it out again. He would finish playing the song with the banjo swaying wildly in front of him.⁵

The Chapel Hillbillies, a black string band, which included Floyd Council at one time, performed a two-man stunt which is a favourite not only

² David Evans, Tommy Johnson (London: Studio Vista, 1971), p. 100.

³ John Fahey, Charley Patton (London: Studio Vista, 1970), p. 26.

⁴ Stephen Calt, record notes to Biograph BLP-12031.

⁵ Samuel B. Charters, The Country Blues (New York: Rinehart, 1959), p. 119.

of black performers but also of white bluegrass and country artists.

Chapel Hillbilly, George Letlow, explains:

We clowned, you might call it, when we were playing . . . I would take the guitar and the mandolin, Floyd was playing the guitar and I was playing the mandolin. I would play the guitar and "note" the mandolin. He would play the mandolin and "note" the guitar. We would get close together so that we could cross-hand it.⁶

Charles Kéjl has noted that such stunts symbolize the mastery of man over machine.⁷ The function of these stunts, however, was to maintain the attention of the audience in contexts where this was of prime importance. But such feats also highlighted the skill and dexterity of the performer and could be used to impress a particular member of an audience. A bluesman may wish to show off in front of a woman he is wooing or he may wish to dazzle a potential competitor. Given this function of the stunts, they might also be performed in certain low-profile contexts, such as the juke joint or the jam session.

There were those contexts, however, where clowning was definitely counterproductive. If the performer misjudged his audience, his antics could provoke a negative response. Such was a case which Eddie Green relates concerning singer Allen Shaw:

On one occasion Allen played at a small community called Rialto for a white party. Rialto is on the bank of the Hatchie River. Allen got drunk and started clowning instead of playing, and the people that were paying him didn't like it. So they picked him up, guitar and all, and threw him in the river with his guitar around his neck.⁸

Of course, the stage shows presented a highly animated performance

⁶ Kip Lornell, "The Chapel Hillbillies," Living Blues, No. 24 (Nov.-Dec. 1975), p. 45.

⁷ Urban Blues (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1966), p. 176.

⁸ Bengt Olsson, Memphis Blues and Jug Bands (London: Studio Vista, 1970), p. 66.

of the blues, including dancing, posing, and the acting out of the lyrics, but they also added a new dimension to the physical performance of the blues--gaudy and outlandish costumes. The singer in a juke joint or house party probably wore his everyday clothes, or, at most, his Sunday best; the cabaret singer would probably wear fashionable apparel. The minstrel show or circus performer might dress in a more unusual costume, maybe even a clown suit, but other than the fact already mentioned that the singer might appear in black-face, evidence of what he wore is lacking.⁹

But the stage show performer, especially the female vaudeville singer, often went to great lengths with her costuming. Bessie Smith's favourite costume was "a white and blue satin dress with a moderate hoop skirt, adorned with strands of pearls and imitation rubies. With it she wore headgear that looked like a cross between a football helmet and a tasseled lamp shade."¹⁰

In the context of the recording studio, animated performance was virtually non-existent. Guitar-flipping, dancing, or even rhythmic body movements were prohibited because of the rather rigid position which the singers had to maintain. Certainly, the technicians would have wanted as little extraneous movement as possible to avoid unnecessary noise or fluctuations in the sound level. But even if such movements were allowed, the recording context would not in most cases call for such animation. There is no audience to attract and no one to impress. Likewise, the

⁹ In Paul Oliver, "Black and Blues," *Observer*, 27 July 1969, p. 16, there is a photograph of a medicine show performance in which the blues singer is in black-face, but otherwise dressed in a plain three-piece suit. There is, however, a white performer on stage wearing an Indian headdress.

¹⁰ Chris Albertson, *Bessie* (New York: Stein and Day, 1972), pp. 67-68.

listening audience does not have to be dazzled with costumes as does the viewing audience, so that singers such as Bessie Smith could wear regular street clothes in this performance context.

The singers in the recording context, unburdened from the need to "act," could devote their full energies to singing and playing, which would probably improve the quality of these aspects of their performance. Son House was of the opinion that the recorded performances of Charley Patton were "better" than his live performances because Patton's general habit of grandstanding in front of live audiences tended to obscure his singing and playing.¹¹

There was, however, one aspect of physical performance which was probably unique to the recording context. It was only in the recording studio that the blues artist could read or refer to printed lyrics as he sang. Broonzy's difficulty in sticking his head in the recording horn and reading his song at the same time has already been mentioned. There were many other cases in which the performer read his song. In the case of the blind singer, an assistant could stand behind him and whisper the lyrics into his ear. This method was observed a number of times in relation to the recording of Blind Lemon Jefferson. Art Satherley recalls whispering the words to Jefferson during one recording session,¹² and John and Emory McClung, two hillbilly singers, remember seeing Jefferson's daughter acting the role of prompter in another session.¹³ Such a method:

¹¹ Al Wilson, "Son House," Broadside (Boston), (1965), rpt. in Blues Unlimited Collector's Classics, No. 14 (1966), p. 12.

¹² Norm Cohen, "'I'm a Record Man'--Uncle Art Satherley Reminisces," JEMF Quarterly, 9 (1972), 19.

¹³ Donald L. Nelson, "The West Virginia Snake Hunters: John and Emory McClung," JEMF Quarterly, 10 (1974), 72.

may also have been used for illiterate singers; it is reported that sighted singer, Charlie Jackson, also used a prompter when recording a new song.¹⁴

This aspect of the physical performance in the recording context would not have been acceptable to live audiences. It is expected that the professional singer, or even the non-professional or traditional performer, know his material by heart. Only in a context in which the singer is unseen can he use written aids or a prompter. The recording artist often needed these aids because of the continual demand by the recording companies for innovative material and the greater likelihood of singing someone else's newly composed songs in the recording context. These two aspects of recorded blues will be discussed in more detail shortly, but it is important to note that, in such a situation, the singer may not have had the time, or the inclination, to memorize his lyrics.

Different contexts of the blues performance also affected the duration of a song. Outside of the recording context, there is little information on how long the average blues song lasted. Perry Bradford writes of a particularly long rendition of "Harlem Blues," performed in a cabaret, which lasted twelve minutes,¹⁵ and the description of Alberta Hunter's night club performance already given (p. 111) indicates that in that context the song was sung over several times to lengthen it. William Ferris claims that, in dancing contexts, songs had to be much longer than the three or four minute blues on records,¹⁶ and this is substantiated by

¹⁴ Charters, Country Blues, p. 52.

¹⁵ Born with the Blues (New York: Oak Publications, 1965), p. 123.

¹⁶ Blues from the Delta (London: Studio Vista, 1970), p. 43.

Son House, who said that Charley Patton would sing a song for up to a half an hour at dances.¹⁷ Richard Middleton's claim, however, that bluesmen would "often sing one song for hours"¹⁸ is probably an exaggeration.

It seems probable that in contexts in which the singer was at the centre of attention of his audience, his song tended to be shorter than when he served a background role. Dancers would not be satisfied with a three-minute song, whereas night club goers would get restless if one song went on for half an hour. The streetsinger probably had the greatest freedom in terms of how long he wished to sing any one song, since his audience's attention was momentary no matter how long or short his entire song was.

By contrast, the recording context allowed the singer no freedom in choosing the length of his song. The average 78rpm disc permits only about two hundred seconds of performance per side. The singer had to come as close to this maximum as possible without going over the limit. This involves a type of precision which is not necessary in other contexts. In a letter to hillbilly artist, Fred Stanley, Columbia Record Company instructed him to work on his songs so that they would not be "less than 2 minutes and 45 seconds and not more than 3 minutes and 15 seconds."¹⁹ Undoubtedly, the same advice was given to blues recording artists.

In order to keep to the time limit, two methods were employed:

¹⁷ Jeff Titon, Early Down Home Blues: A Musical and Cultural Analysis (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, forthcoming).

¹⁸ Pop Music and the Blues: A Study of the Relationship and Its Significance (London: Victor Gollancz, 1972), p. 45.

¹⁹ Fred Reif, "Fred Stanley: His Story," Old Time Music, No. 6 (Autumn 1972), p. 15.

self-regulation and signals from the studio control room. The singers would consciously work to fit their songs into the time limit. Tommy Johnson apparently sang short songs in other contexts and had to pad out his works for recordings,²⁰ but most bluesmen had the opposite problem of shortening their songs to fit in the allotted three minutes. Booker White used a clock to time his songs when practicing for recording sessions,²¹ and a similar method was probably used by the perfectionist, Will Shade, or the conscientious urban singers such as Thomas Dorsey, Tampa Red, or Leroy Carr.

Whether the artist had budgeted his time or not, the studio technicians had a system of lights to warn the performer that his three minutes were drawing to a close:

There were two lights on top of the window, one green and one red. When the green light came on the performer would begin, and when the red light came on the performer was to end the verse as quickly as possible and stop.²²

If the artist was blind, a prompter would give him the signal: " . . . it was Willie's [Trice] job to tell [Blind Boy] Fuller when to start and when to conclude a number, by touching him on the arm, which he did whenever Mayo Williams was ready to record."²³

John Szwed has pointed out that this time limit must have very much

²⁰ Evans, Tommy Johnson, p. 50. One wonders if this was true in juke joint or house party contexts, or just in jam sessions.

²¹ David Evans, "Booker White--Part 2," Blues Unlimited, No. 37 (Oct. 1966), p. 8.

²² J. Nicholas Perls, "Notes on Son House and the Paramount Days," Blues Unlimited, No. 18 (Jan. 1965), p. 4.

²³ Bruce Bastin, Crying for the Carolines (London: Studio Vista, 1971), p. 19.

affected the form of the blues,²⁴ and he is certainly correct in that the form became more precise and structured. But, in the same way, every context in which the blues is performed must affect the form of that performance.

The blues singers seemed to have little trouble in conforming to this time limit, as there are few examples of blues recordings which end abruptly or which fade out. Undoubtedly, there were some performers who could not restrict themselves to the three minute limit, and perhaps some of the many "unissued" singers found in Godrich and Dixon's discography include these artists. Rubin Lacy recalls that preacher, Rev. Cotton, found it impossible to keep within the limit:

He got happy preaching, I think, about "Somebody Touched Me," the time when the woman touched the hem of Christ's garment. He got happy, and when the red light came on for him to stop, he wouldn't stop . . . And so he told me that day, "I'm going to make this record this time, but I don't mean to make them another one. I ain't going to mess up God's word that way. When I get happy I have to be choked down."²⁵

Another aspect of time which was affected by performance contexts was the tempo of the blues song. Again, there is little concrete information as to how tempo changed to suit different situations. Tommy Johnson played "Big Road Blues" faster for dances than he did on record,²⁶ which may indicate that recorded blues, in general, were slower than juke joint or house party blues.

The blues singer had to be aware of the effects of the content or

²⁴ "Negro Music: Urban Renewal," in Our Living Traditions: An Introduction to American Folklore, ed. Tristram P. Coffin (New York: Basic Books, 1968), p. 274.

²⁵ David Evans, "The Rev. Reubin Lacy--Part 2," Blues Unlimited, No. 41 (Feb. 1966), p. 9.

²⁶ Evans, Tommy Johnson, p. 92.

subject matter of his songs on his audience. Different contexts required different restrictions on the content of blues songs. As has already been pointed out, the blues is predominantly a love lyric, but the topic of love can be approached in any number of ways, not all of which are suitable for every context. Charters is probably justified in saying that when Blind Lemon Jefferson played at that picnic for the General Association of the Baptist Church, his audience "would not have stood for 'Black Snake Moan' or 'Piney Woods Money Mama'".²⁷

Howard W. Odum and Guy B. Johnson long ago pointed out that profanity "is inserted in songs in proportion as the singer is accustomed to use it, or as the occasion demands or permits its use."²⁸ Most blues singers were quite adept at singing profane or obscene songs. Both Skip James and Son House were quite capable in this respect in certain contexts,²⁹ and the female vaudeville singers, such as Mattie Hite, Mary Stafford, Edith Wilson, Josephine Beatty and Josie Miles, all sang obscene material at suitable occasions.³⁰

The occasions at which obscene blues could be sung tended to be those informal in-group contexts, such as jam sessions, juke joints, or house parties. In describing the occasions when his brother, Tommy Johnson, sang obscene material, Mager Johnson said, "He sang them over in the night or something, in other words, just somebody out there, people

²⁷ Country Blues, p. 70.

²⁸ The Negro and His Songs (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1925), p. 174.

²⁹ Stephen Calt, Nick Perls, and Michael Stewart, record notes to Yazoo L-1014.

³⁰ Paul Oliver, Aspects of Blues Tradition (New York: Oak Publications, 1970), p. 205.

just out looking around. They don't care where they be."³¹ Before audiences composed of whites, or other outsiders, or before certain groups of women or children, such songs would be taboo. Evans writes that Tommy Johnson

would occasionally sing songs with obscene lyrics, even before women and white people, which could sometimes be dangerous. Ishmon Bracey recalls an occasion when One Legged Sam had to put his hand over Johnson's mouth to keep him quiet.³²

The recording context was definitely one in which overt obscenity was taboo. The singers were playing to please the company officials, almost all of whom were white, as well as to the imaginary audience of faceless, unfamiliar blacks. Even if the record companies had allowed obscene material to be recorded, the singer may have been reluctant to do so in such a formal and strange context. Speckled Red clearly makes the distinction between proper and improper contexts for performing obscene material:

They used to have a word they say "playin' the dozens". It was talkin' dirty you know . . . So I made up a kind of song out of the words and I called it "The Dirty Dozens." But they was real bad words you see; I was playin' in one of them turpentine jukes where it didn't matter. Anything I said there was all right in there you see. I had to clean it up for the record . . .³³

To the bluesman it was not just a matter of impropriety to sing taboo lyrics in the wrong place; it was a matter of self-protection. Buster Pickens' comment on Kokomo Arnold's song, "Sissy Man Blues," which has a theme of homosexuality, was not that it was improper, but that "God, I

³¹ Evans, Tommy Johnson, p. 92.

³² Ibid., p. 96.

³³ Paul Oliver, Conversation with the Blues (New York: Horizon Press, 1965), p. 61.

thought they'd put him inside for that!"³⁴

Other topics could also be taboo in certain blues performance situations. Overt social protest was a topic which was definitely limited to in-group contexts where the performer was sure that his song would not offend or antagonize any portion of his audience. William Ferris, in his article, "Racial Repertoires Among Blues Performers," points out that the bluesmen have quite different repertoires depending upon whether they are playing to white or black audiences.³⁵ Certainly, the black performer would be taking a great risk in performing a blues of social protest in front of a white audience. Their reaction to such a song could be considerably worse than their reaction to Allen Shaw's clowning (see p. 153).

In the recording context, where as pointed out before the bluesman's immediate audience is white, he would naturally try to avoid overt social commentary in his songs. There are, in fact, very few recorded blues which can be called overt protest songs. In the context of a prison, however, where there is a strong adversary relationship between the black inmates and white guards, the performer would have a receptive audience to blues of protest in his fellow prisoners.

But even in contexts in which the audience was black certain social topics may be taboo. According to Bill Broonzy, Tommy McClennan misjudged the sensitivity of northern blacks to the word "nigger" which he insisted

³⁴ Oliver, *Aspects*, p. 188. For more on obscenity and sexual symbolism in the blues, see Samuel B. Charters, *The Poetry of the Blues* (New York: Oak Publications, 1963), pp. 35-66, 80-97; Guy B. Johnson, "Double Meaning in the Popular Negro Blues," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 22 (1927), 12-20; and Oliver, *Aspects*, pp. 164-261.

³⁵ *Ethnomusicology*, 14 (1970), 439-49.

on using in a song at a Chicago house party:

So I just stayed close to him [McClennan] because I knew there would be some trouble when he would get to that verse. And there was. I had to put Tommy out the window and me and him ran about five miles to another friend of mine's house where we got a drink.³⁶

Context does not only affect the use of taboo subjects in the blues, but subject matter in general. When a singer is performing within his own community, or within a group which he knows well, he may sing songs or alter his songs so that they make special reference to local people or local events. This is true of song traditions in general; Herbert Halpert has pointed out that a song of purely local significance is often more important in a culture than an older more widespread song.³⁷

At the house party, juke joint, or during a jam session, lyrics of local significance might be used more often than at a medicine show, stage show, or in streetsinging. Where the audience is more general, the singer would be more likely to limit the content of his songs to generalities or to subjects which would be generally meaningful. In the recording context, this would also be true; lyrics with obscure references or in-jokes are infrequent. This is not to say that such references do not occur at all in recorded blues. Singers continually refer to local place names and local people, but the context in which they use these names and places usually makes clear their significance to those outside the singer's immediate culture.

On occasion, the actual context of the recording session will influence the contents of the song. Memphis Slim (Peter Chatman), in his

³⁶Big Bill Blues: William Broonzy's Story, ed. Yannick Bruynoghe (1955; rpt. New York: Oak Publications, 1964), pp. 104-43.

³⁷"Vitality of Tradition and Local Songs," Journal of the International Folk Music Council, 3 (1951), 40.

blues, "Old Taylor," makes obvious reference to A & R man, Lester Melrose:

Now you see Mr. Melrose standing in the floor
He going to give us a little drink just before he go (CHATP-6).

Most likely, Melrose was at the recording session and the entire stanza seems to refer to the use of liquor at recording sessions, as discussed earlier (pp. 139-41). But such in-jokes are rare in recorded blues.

Performers might also alter the contents of their lyrics in order to have an effect on, or to influence, a specific situation within the performing context. If the singer has a grudge against a member of the audience, or if he feels good or bad about performing in a certain situation, or if he wishes to attract the attention of a member of the opposite sex, he might use his song as an expression of his immediate feelings. Again, the more informal the context, the more likely this is to happen.

An excellent example of a blues singer using the lyrics of his song to fit a specific situation is given by Mac McCormick, who observed Lightnin' Hopkins in a juke joint context:

A remarkable instance of Lightnin's making a song occurred one night in a jook joint when he told a passing waitress to bring him a beer. The girl mumbled something about being busy. Lightnin's retort was a song: "Oh, she's black and she's evil." Lifting a hand to point out the intimidated girl scurrying thru (sic) the crowd, he cried, "Oh, that's somebody's black and evil woman." After two verses pursuing this theme, the girl brought him the beer, and Lightnin' sang, "Oh, she's sweet and she's kind . . . Come walking with a cold beer and says it's mine." Pausing to gulp from the bottle, he smiled at the girl, and then slid the bottle (still nearly full) along the guitar strings, letting the whining notes punctuate his singing: "Oh, babe, if you was mine, I'd starch and grind. Oh, babe, if you were mine, I'd carry your water from the boggy bayou."³⁸

Bluesmen had the ability to "song" someone; that is, to punish some-

³⁸ Record notes to Tradition TLP-1040. Ellipsis is sic.

one by lambasting them in song.³⁹ The above example illustrates the blues singer's technique quite well. This function of the blues would rarely, if ever, be found in the recording context, again because it is associated with more informal in-group situations such as juke joints, house parties, or jam sessions.

The one area in which the recording context was extremely influential was in the number of different blues songs within a performer's repertoire. Before a singer could record for a company, he had to convince the A & R man, or other company officials, that his material and style of performance was marketable. This meant that the performer's songs had to meet the record company's aesthetic and commercial criteria.

If the singer's style or repertoire were not to the liking of the A & R man, the performer would be rejected at the audition. Thomas A. Edison auditioned Bessie Smith for his Edison Record Company and rejected her with the note, "Bessie Smith. Voice N.G. [no good],"⁴⁰ which indicates Edison's lack of knowledge of the black record-buying public's tastes.

Black record company officials were also capable of misjudging the public's tastes. Harry Pace also rejected Bessie Smith, not because of her voice, but because he found her performance aesthetically unappealing:

Whilst the recording engineers and the accompanying group of musicians waited, the tall, plump, copper-skinned young woman broke off in the middle of her song and expectorated. Harry Pace, the President of the Pace Phonograph Company which issued Black Swan records, was disgusted and summarily ended the recording test, dismissing the

³⁹ For a discussion of this function of traditional songs, see Edward D. Ives, Larry Gorman: The Man Who Made the Songs (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1964), pp. 180-87.

⁴⁰ Paul Oliver, Bessie Smith (1959; rpt. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1961), p. 25.

girl on the spot.⁴¹

If the performer were accepted for a recording contract, his repertoire would be further scrutinized, and any material which did not meet the company's criteria would not be recorded. Obscene songs and songs of social protest would usually not meet the criteria, and songs which the record company felt did not portray the proper image of the bluesman would also be rejected: "As late as the early nineteen-forties Brownie McGhee was told, when he asked to record some hillbilly songs he regularly performed, that it wasn't 'your kind of music'."⁴²

The kind of music which the record companies generally wanted was original blues compositions. Odum and Johnson were the first to point this out when they wrote that "phonograph artists are encouraged by their employers to sing blues of their own making,"⁴³ and talent scout, Sam Ayo, corroborates this statement:

They [the blues singers] had all their own material--in other words we wouldn't record anyone else's tunes--they'd have their own originals. You have better luck recording a person's own originals than by recording someone else's tunes. Blues--mostly blues, and it was all original stuff.⁴⁴

This meant that before a singer could record he had to prove to the record company that he had original songs:

The companies want Speir to be sure that each singer to be recorded had at least four different songs of his own composition. Many of them could sing plenty of songs, but they were not original. In other words, they were either traditional or had already been recorded in variant form, or they were interpretations of hit

⁴¹ Ibid., p. ix.

⁴² Titon, Early Down Home Blues.

⁴³ Howard W. Odum and Guy B. Johnson, Negro Workaday Songs (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1926), p. 24.

⁴⁴ Oliver, Conversation with the Blues, p. 117.

records.⁴⁵

This could present a problem to the blues singer who relied heavily on traditional material or other people's compositions to fill out his repertoire. But perhaps a worse problem was that the record company official's concept of "original" might be very different from the blues singer's concept, which meant that songs which the performer considered his own creations might be rejected by the record company as being "unoriginal." For example, Clifford Gibson, like many other blues singers, felt that a change in lyrics constituted a new song, even if the accompanying tune remained the same.⁴⁶ An A & R man, however, might have considered all of Gibson's songs the same because they all had the same tune, and thus dub them "unoriginal."

More often, it happened that the A & R man did not consider the lyrics different enough from a singer's previous songs to make his new song "original." Such was the case with Tommy Johnson:

Speir wanted to make certain that Johnson had at least four different original songs, as this was the requirement of the companies then. He claims that Johnson had only two and that they had to spend some time together before they could meet the requirements. This may seem strange in a professional musician like Tommy Johnson, who must have had an extensive repertoire of songs. Yet . . . Johnson, like many folk blues singers, had the habit of using some of the same lyrics and musical ideas in different songs. Thus his pieces may not have sounded "different" to Speir's ears.⁴⁷

In their quest for original material, the record companies would often instruct the singers to make up blues songs especially for the

⁴⁵ David Evans, "An Interview with H. C. Speir," JEMF Quarterly, 8 (1972), 120.

⁴⁶ Stephen Calt, Nick Perls, and Mike Stewart, record notes to Yazoo L-1027.

⁴⁷ Evans, Tommy Johnson, p. 46.

to another singer, the company suggested that he compose his own song on the same theme:

James attempted to record a song which he had learned from another Paramount record, the "Forty-Four Blues" by James Wiggins, Paramount 12860. [Arthur] Laibley suggested that James do a song about a gun with a different size calibre, and so James recorded his "22-20 Blues." When Laibley requested that James make up a song about the depression, the singer recorded "Hard Time Killin' Floor Blues."⁵¹

After the singer had been with a company for a while, they might order him to write a topical song in the same way that a newspaper might order a feature article to be written by one of its staff members. Such was the case with Brownie McGhee:

I went on back to Tennessee, and I've still got the telegram he [C. B. Long] wrote me and said: "Brownie, write me a song. [Blind Boy] Fuller's very sick, 'Please Mister Fuller Don't Die'." I started writing on that, and before I could finish, before anything materialized, I got a call from him . . . Fuller was dead! Said: "Brownie, why don't you work on a song 'The Death of Blind Boy Fuller.' And be sure to mention his women in there because he was very fond of women." And that's where the song "Death of Blind Boy" comes in.⁵²

A record company might ask several singers to write songs on a single topic if they thought that topic was particularly marketable. The 31 October 1935 Decca session saw several artists sing blues on a Christmas or New Year theme, probably at the direction of the company which was getting ready for their Christmas promotion that year.⁵³ Indeed, companies might go to great lengths, if they felt a topic was an especially good one:

Between April and June thousands of people were victims of the floods [of the Mississippi River in 1927] and according to Big Bill Broonzy the talent scout, Mayo Williams, chartered a boat for a number of the blues singers to witness them. Including Lonnie Johnson, Kansas Joe

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 12.

⁵² Barry Elmes, "Living Blues Interview: Sonny Terry & Brownie McGhee," Living Blues, No. 13 (Summer 1973), p. 20.

⁵³ Oliver, Aspects, p. 36.

session, which meant that the singer had to increase his repertoire of blues on rather short notice. Booker White's experience in this respect is typical:

When he came to the recording session he had songs like "Prowling Ground Hog" and "Sitting On Top of the World." The recording engineer liked Booker's voice but didn't want to record these old songs. So he gave Booker a meal ticket and a room for two weeks and told him to make up some original songs. Booker thought about this and came up with "Pinebluff Arkansas" and "Shake 'Em on Down."⁴⁸

This is not to say that companies recorded only original compositions. There are many traditional songs and ballads and re-recordings of other people's works on race records, but the main staple of the companies was original blues compositions. Even when they wanted traditional songs, they actively sought those pieces which had not already been "overdone" on record. Note the following letter from T. G. Rockwell to John Hurt:

We would like to have you get together about eight selections at least four of them to be old time tunes, similar to selections "Frankie" and "Nobody's Business." There are a great many tunes like these which are known throughout the South . . .⁴⁹

The skill and imagination of the blues singers was severely tested by the companies because of this requirement. How he coped with this pressure will be discussed later, but it must be pointed out that the companies helped the singers to compose songs in a number of ways. Quite often they would suggest topics or ideas which the singer could work with. Sometimes the company would want the singer to compose a song in the style of an already successful bluesman; Son House was told to compose a song in the style of Blind Lemon Jefferson and the result was "Mississippi County Farm Blues."⁵⁰ When Skip James wanted to record a song belonging

⁴⁸ Evans, "Booker White--Part 2," p. 7.

⁴⁹ Dick Spottswood, record notes to Piedmont PLP-13157.

⁵⁰ Fahey, p. 12.

McCoy, Springback James, Sippie Wallace and Broonzy himself the party was joined by Bessie Smith.⁵⁴

For those who were new to the recording context, or who were not very imaginative composers, the record company would supply help more directly in the writing of their blues. Sometimes the company would employ one of their regular artists to coach a new singer. This was apparently the case with Arthur Crudup, when he first started recording:

He (Melrose) say, "You reckon you can get me a couple more songs?" I said "I don't know." Tampa said, "Come on over to my house tomorrow afternoon and I'll help you." So I went over there and he gave me a little instruction on it, you know, how to get my words together and he told me don't have no fear, 'cause that's the way I done and that's the way the rest of them done--he says nobody perfect, and I just went from there.⁵⁵

Joe Williams and Charley Jordan fulfilled a similar role at their rehearsal hall in St. Louis:

Williams said that he and Jordan would work closely with various singers and instrumentalists, preparing them for recording sessions for which Jordan had arranged. The two men would select and re-work songs for the performers and drill them in their execution; when all was ready, Jordan would pile the musicians into his car and drive them to Chicago or wherever the recordings were being made, working closely with the record company officials charged with supervising the recordings.⁵⁶

Sometimes the white A & R men themselves would help the performers:

It appears that Long frequently wrote or rewrote songs for Fuller and would often write down the verses that Fuller had sung, to prevent him from forgetting them. He would carefully rehearse Fuller for some three or four days, having him stay at his home or at a hotel in Burlington. . . .⁵⁷

Bastin also reports that while in Memphis, "Long heard an elderly man

⁵⁴ Oliver, Bessie Smith, p. 47.

⁵⁵ Mike Leadbitter, "Big Boy Crudup," Blues Unlimited, No. 75 (Sept. 1970), p. 17.

⁵⁶ Pete Welding, record notes to Origin Jazz Library OJL-20.

⁵⁷ Bastin, Crying for the Carolines, p. 23.

sing 'Touch It Up and Go' which he rewrote for Fuller and which he had Fuller cut."⁵⁸

Besides helping the singers to write songs, the record companies would also supply compositions which were not from the performer's repertoire at all. Especially in the early years, if one female vaudeville singer recorded a big-selling song, other companies would "cover" this song; that is, they would have another artist record the same song in the hope that they could exploit its popularity.⁵⁹ Indeed, the female vaudeville singers performed a high proportion of songs which were written for them, often by Tin-Pan-Alley-type blues writers such as Perry Bradford, Clarence Williams, Porter Grainger, or Thomas A. Dorsey.

Covering or singing other people's compositions was not practised solely by the female vaudeville artists; blues singers in general would expand their recorded repertoire with outside material. Blues such as "Sitting On Top of the World," "Big Road Blues," and "Tight Like That" were often covered by blues artists, and record companies were not adverse to giving newly composed songs to singers. The following letter from Okeh Record Company to white singer Land Norris could have as easily been sent to a blues singer:

... asking you to be in New York on April 27th and 28th (1926) to make some recordings and at which time we suggest you making eight selections so that we would suggest your picking out the best eight numbers that you now have and when you arrive here, we will undoubtedly be able to give you one or two which you can learn in a very short time.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 22.

⁵⁹ For a discussion of this practice, see John Godrich, record notes to VJM VLP-17.

⁶⁰ "Commercial Music Documents: Number Nine," JEMF Quarterly, 7 (1971), 125.

Even highly innovative singers such as Blind Lemon Jefferson⁶¹ and Peetie Wheatstraw⁶² sung other writer's compositions. Alex Moore recalls that "Blind Morris McHenry recorded some songs I wrote for Decca Records in Chicago,"⁶³ The young Andrew Hogg, who after World War II became famous as Smokey Hogg, began his recording career in 1937 with two Wheatstraw compositions,⁶⁴ while Roosevelt Scott seemed to have several sources for his blues:

Joe McCoy, one "Robert" (not a musician) and Willie Townsend (a Yazoo City trumpet player) wrote some of his songs.⁶⁵

As professionals, these blues singers probably did not mind singing other artists' songs, since such a practice would be common in a number of performing contexts. But the fact that the record companies dictated which songs were to be sung may have offended the sensitive performer or have been contrary to his aesthetics. For example, Willie Trice "was forced to sing 'Let Her Go God Bless Her', which he loathed and does not wish to hear even out of curiosity."⁶⁶

⁶¹ Bruce Bastin and John Cowley, "Uncle Art's Logbook Blues," Blues Unlimited, No. 108 (June-July 1974), p. 13. David Evans writes that composer credits to some of Jefferson's later songs were to someone named Lamore, in "Folk, Commercial, and Folkloristic Aesthetics in the Blues," Jazzforschung, 5 (1973), 17.

⁶² See Wheatstraw's discography in Paul Garon, The Devil's Son-In-Law: The Story of Peetie Wheatstraw and His Songs (London: Studio Vista, 1971), pp. 107-11, which lists all composer credits for his songs.

⁶³ Alex Moore, "Yours Truly, Whistlin' Alex Moore," Blues Unlimited, No. 109 (Aug.-Sept. 1974), p. 14.

⁶⁴ Gary Paulsen, "In Remembrance of Smokey Hogg," Blues Unlimited, No. 55 (July 1968), p. 3.

⁶⁵ Bob Eagle, "Roosevelt Scott Remembers . . .," Blues World, No. 43 (Summer 1972), p. 12.

⁶⁶ Bastin, Crying for the Carolines, pp. 36-37.

The result of the record companies' need for original material was the broadening of blues singers' repertoires of self-composed songs. In no other contexts was there such a constant demand for new material. As background musicians at a juke joint or house-party, the bluesman's repertoire did not have to be large; as long as he could keep couples dancing, it did not overly matter whether he sang his own material or someone else's, or whether he had a great store of original songs or just a few reliable pieces.

The streetsinger had little need to continually create new material, since his audience was constantly changing; he could sing the same song several times over without any different result than if he had sung several different songs. The stage show, medicine show, or cabaret performer would not have to have a repertoire of more than a dozen songs to satisfy their audiences, since their performing time was relatively short, amounting to perhaps no more than an hour per night. In any of these contexts, the singer could rely on many more traditional songs or recognized blues compositions by other authors to please their audiences than could the same singer in a recording context.

The demand for originality in the recording context had many implications for blues composition in general. Stephen Calt sees the influence of recording on blues composition as devolutionary:

The introduction of blues on phonograph brought a new emphasis to blues lyrics, if only because a passive rather than participatory audience now awaited them. That the country bluesman who obtained recording sessions in the middle and later Twenties were so often unequal to the challenge of the new medium that would reap dividends for the facile songwriters like Leroy Carr and Barbecue Bob is probably indicative of the fact that they could not have realistically anticipated their discovery by commercial talent scouts. But by the same token many country bluesmen made only a hack's response to the novelty presented by the blues recording, copying its verses as

they came down to him.⁶⁷

Calt believes that the bluesman was "unequal to the challenge" of the recording context because of the singer's reliance on previously recorded material to compose new blues songs. But, as will be shown, this use of recorded material could just as easily be viewed as resourcefulness on the part of the artist.

David Evans has a more balanced view of the implications of recorded blues, in which the traditionally composed blues and the blues composed for a recorded context can be placed at opposite ends of an aesthetic continuum:

A double folk aesthetic of blues performers and audiences has thus gradually developed with the older values of "truth", tradition, and familiarity on one side, and the more recent commercially influenced values of lyric originality, thematic coherence, and standardization of musical structure on the other. Since both types of blues can be performed by the same singer, and since a number of blues seem to share the characteristics of both types, we ought to view this double folk aesthetic as a spectrum rather than as a set of opposing values. Blues performers and audiences have much less difficulty in accepting and enjoying all kinds of blues than have songwriters and record company executives who were responsible, in large part, for broadening the aesthetic spectrum.⁶⁸

In summary, it can be said that the recording context greatly affected the composition of the blues. The elimination of the physical aspects of the singer's performance forced him to rely totally on linguistics, rather than on kinesics or proxemics to articulate the message of his song. He was forced to compress the message of his blues, perhaps making it more coherent and forceful in the process, if he was to meet the three-minute time allowance of the record. He could not rely on taboo subjects

⁶⁷ Stephan Grossman, Stephen Calt, and Hal Grossman, Country Blues Songbook (New York: Oak Publications, 1973), p. 14.

⁶⁸ "Folk, Commercial, and Folkloristic Aesthetics," p. 20.

or in-joke references in composing his songs, but had to make use of more general and universal subject matter. The constant pressure of the record companies for originality of composition forced the singer to tax his creative powers to the utmost. In addition to these constraints, the singer received no direct audience feedback from his performance, and therefore he had to rely solely on his own internal feedback to support him and encourage his performance.

The singer, in the recording context, was forced to be more self-reliant in his performance, linguistically articulate, and continually innovative. The result of these contextual constraints was a highly complex and compact form of song, relying heavily on short aphoristic pronouncements and concise poetic imagery. Thus did the recording context add a new dimension to blues aesthetics and blues composition. In the next chapter, we shall examine to what extent blues singers were influenced by records, and to what extent the recording context influenced other contexts in which the blues was performed.

VIII THE INFLUENCE OF THE RECORDING ON THE PERFORMER AND ON PERFORMANCE CONTEXTS

Paul Oliver has written that if "Mamie Smith had never entered a recording studio, if the blues had never been recorded in any form, it would have thrived as folk music."¹ This statement is, of course, true, but would the blues have thrived as well and would it have taken the same form as the recorded blues? In the last chapter, the effect of the record companies' demands on blues composition was studied. In this chapter, we will see that the recorded blues was so inextricably a part of the whole tradition of the blues that its influence must be regarded as a major factor in shaping blues tradition.

Although it is only in recent years that scholars have recognized the overall importance of the phonodisc to the diffusion and development of twentieth century song traditions,² this fact was recognized fairly early in relation to black folksong and, more specifically, to the blues. In Negro Workaday Songs, Howard W. Odum and Guy B. Johnson describe the folk-popular interchange in which recorded blues was transmitted to the folk who in turn created new variants and songs from them.³

Newman I. White made an even stronger case for this type of interchange. He pointed out that twentieth century singers assimilated the "factory-made 'blues'" in the same way that nineteenth century singers

¹ The Meaning of the Blues (New York: Collier Books, 1963), p. 22.

² D. K. Wilgus discussed this in a paper delivered at the American Folklore Society Annual Meeting, New Orleans, 25 Oct. 1975, entitled "'You've Come a Long Way Baby': Folk Record Reviewing Since 1948."

³ Negro Workaday Songs (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1926), p. 25.

learned from minstrel shows," and, in referring to the female vaudeville singers, White wrote, "they enter into quite a considerable part of the blues, which Mr. Handy says originated in low dives, but which certainly serve the ends of labor before they came upon the vaudeville stage, and then again to laborer through the phonograph."⁵ White also recognized the reverse process in which professional songwriters adapted folk material for recordings which were then returned to the folk.⁶ He took a rather radical position in this matter: "Most blues sung by Negroes to-day have only a secondary folk origin; their primary source is the phonograph record."⁷

Odum and Johnson and White saw this folk-popular interchange as evolutionary, but scholars in later years recognized this process as inherent to the transmission and diffusion of the blues. In 1940, John W. Work wrote,

The phonograph recording of these songs does not destroy their "folkness." The same person who formerly created blues for her own use and the entertainment of her immediate audience, now creates them for phonograph recordings, and justifiably so. Now a new blues may be heard in all sections of the country in the short period of a month or less after the issuing of the record, whereas formerly it probably took years for one to become known and sung generally. An interesting observation of this fact is that in the process of "taking over" of a blues by the folk, the individual singing it almost always gives her own coloring to the song by modifying, omitting, and adding lines.⁸

In more recent years scholars have reiterated this important point.

⁴ "The White Man in the Woodpile: Some Influences on Negro Secular Folk-Songs," American Speech, 4 (1928-29), 210-11.

⁵ American Negro Folk-Songs (1928; rpt. Hatboro, Pa.: Folklore Associates, 1965), p. 311.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 186-87.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 390.

⁸ American Negro Songs and Spirituals (New York: Bonanza Books, 1940), p. 29.

Harold Courlander termed this circular process, from folk to record and back to folk, "feedback,"⁹ and Paul Oliver also perceived this circular interchange: "Undoubtedly the issue of the records in itself moulded taste, stimulating attempts to sing in a similar vein, and in turn increased the demand."¹⁰ Harry Oster has probably made the fullest statement on this point:

Thus a basic pattern in blues development was begun in which the oral informant of a traditional society was often replaced by a disc which exposed his listeners to the style and repertoire of singers not in their immediate circle. The cycle of development then ran from folk singer to professional performer to record, and back to folk singer, the progress marked by constant changes.¹¹

Oster raises a further point in this statement which modern scholars have to some extent pursued: the importance of recordings in the transmission, not only of lyrics and music, but style of performance from one area to another. Pete Welding expands on this point:

Through records, the singer could sample traditions from widely separated areas; as a result, his frame of reference, as well as that of his audience, was widened considerably. Local traditions tended to become blurred and eventually obliterated in the face of an ever-widening common blues tradition and, with it, a common formal structure, mode of address, and a set of reference and commonplace ideas, phrases, motifs and verses.¹²

Paul Oliver similarly stated that through "the blues record the lower-class Negro was able to hear the voice of his counterpart from a thousand miles away,"¹³ and Bruce Bastin has pointed out that the "spread of blues

⁹ Negro Folk Music, U. S. A. (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1963), p. 10.

¹⁰ Meaning of the Blues, p. 22.

¹¹ Living Country Blues (Detroit: Folklore Associates, 1969), p. 18.

¹² "Big Joe and Sonny Boy: The Shock of Recognition," record notes to Blues Classics BC-21.

¹³ Aspects of Blues Tradition (New York: Oak Publications, 1970), p. 2.

records in the late '20s had a great impact . . . not only in making diverse styles available but in helping to spread styles with regional distinctiveness."¹⁴

Perhaps Tony Russell best sums up the point to be made here:

. . . the bearers of tradition are not purists, but eclectics. They will devour ditties from records with the same enthusiasm as they imbibe songs learned at mother's knee or other unimpeachably oral sources. Indeed, the whole business of "oral tradition" is being reshaped by new media; to scorn the record is to ignore one of the most potent diffusers of folk-usable material.¹⁵

At the very centre of this folk-popular interchange were the performers themselves. There were few, if any, blues singers who were not influenced by records before they recorded, and probably none who remained uninfluenced after they had put their songs on wax. We have already seen that phonographs were plentiful among the blacks, and blues singers readily remember the first records or record players in their homes (see pp. 142-44).

It must be remembered that most blues singers grew up in the first generation of record-users. By the time most of them were old enough to appreciate this form of media, which would have been no earlier than the

¹⁴ Crying for the Carolines (London: Studio Vista, 1970), pp. 14-15.

¹⁵ Blacks Whites and Blues (New York: Stein and Day, 1970), p. 26. For similar views on the effect of recording on the transmission and diffusion of the blues, see Ed. Cray, "An Acculturative Continuum for Negro Folk Song in the United States," Ethnomusicology, 5 (1961), 14n; William Ferris, Jr., Blues from the Delta (London: Studio Vista, 1970), p. 98; Dave Hatch, "Robert Johnson: An Evolutional Re-Appraisal," Blues Unlimited, No. 26 (Oct. 1965), p. 6; Guy B. Johnson, "Negro Folk Songs," in Culture in the South, ed. W. T. Couch (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1935), pp. 558-59; and John F. Szwed, "Negro Music: Urban Renewal," in Our Living Traditions: An Introduction to American Folklore, ed. Tristram P. Coffin (New York: Basic Books, 1968), pp. 273-74.

the first decade of the twentieth century, records had been household items for at least ten years. Calt's observation that a "phonograph purchased by a Bolton cafe owner in 1908 gave Bo [Chatmon] and his brothers access to contemporary pop material like 'Wild Cherry Rag,' 'Ballin' the Jack,' and 'Chicken Reel'"¹⁶ must have been a very typical experience in the early life of blues performers.

It should come as no surprise, then, that when race records started to be produced, blues singers were among their buyers. This point has often been made about the younger generations of blues singers, but the older artists such as Charley Patton and Skip James were equally influenced.¹⁷ Howard W. Odum's informant, Left-Wing Gordon, who was certainly among the first-generation blues singers, made this point when he said, "Some of most pop'lar Blues of women sung on record, but eve'ybody sings 'em."¹⁸

The importance of the early female vaudeville singers and their influence on the later "country" blues singers cannot be overstated. It must be remembered that for the first five or six years of the race record era almost all of the performers on disc were vaudeville singers. Jeff Titon has called the influence of these early singers on later blues recording artists "substantial,"¹⁹ and blues anthologist, Eric Sackheim, considered it essential that he include vaudeville blues in his large

¹⁶ Stephen Calt, record notes to Yazoo L-1034.

¹⁷ Stephen Calt makes this point quite well in "King Solomon Hill Revisited," Blues Unlimited, No. 70 (Feb.-Mar. 1970), pp. 4-5.

¹⁸ Rainbow Round My Shoulder: The Blue Trail of Black Ulysses (n. pl.: Grosset and Dunlap by arrangement with Bobbs-Merrill, 1928), p. 256.

¹⁹ Early Down Home Blues: A Musical and Cultural Analysis (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, forthcoming).

compilation of blues lyrics because of "the reciprocal influences of the two groups of singers."²⁰

Blind Blake listened to the vaudeville singers' records,²¹ and Tampa Red was similarly influenced:

That record of "Crazy Blues" by Mamie Smith, it was one of the first blues records made; I could just hear it ringing in my head. I said to myself, "I don't know any music, but I can play that!"²²

When Titon asked Son House about the influence of vaudeville singers on his singing, House replied,

Well, yeah, some things. No music, but their singing. Old Bessie Smith used to be our favorite. . . . (She) had the best voice--and words.²³

The later-recorded male singers also influenced other singers through their recordings. Will Shade, leader of the Memphis Jug Band, first heard jug band music on a Clifford Hayes record²⁴; Tommy Johnson learned some of his repertoire from the recordings of Victoria Spivey, Jim Jackson, Big Bill Broonzy, Lonnie Johnson, Pine Top Smith, and Leroy Carr;²⁵ Willie Trice learned from the records of Ramblin' Thomas, Blind Lemon Jefferson, and Blind Blake;²⁶

Those blues singers who did not have access to record players might still have had access to the blues which were on the records. Many of the vaudeville blues were simultaneously recorded and printed on sheet

²⁰ The Blues Line: A Collection of Blues Lyrics (New York: Grossman, 1969), p. 8. By "two groups," Sackheim is referring to the vaudeville and "country" performer groups.

²¹ Stephen Calt, record notes to Biograph BLP-12031.

²² John Miller, record notes to Yazoo L-1039.

²³ Early Down Home Blues. Ellipsis is sic.

²⁴ Samuel B. Charters, record notes to Origin Jazz Library OJL-4.

²⁵ David Evans, Tommy Johnson (London: Studio Vista, 1971), p. 97.

²⁶ Bruce Bastin and Pete Lowry, "'Tricks Ain't Workin' No More': Blues from the South-East Part 3," Blues Unlimited, No. 69 (Jan. 1970), p. 8.

music. This sheet music was distributed and sold in much the same way as were the records, and according to Odum and Johnson, "practically every 'hit' is issued in both the published and phonographed form."²⁷ For example, Perry Bradford's song, "Fare-Thee Honey Blues," was published as sheet music with a photograph of Mamie Smith and her Jazz Hounds on the front cover. In bold letters below the photograph is the announcement, "Get this number for your phonograph on Okeh Record No. 4194."²⁸

Some of the blues of the male singers also found their way into print. In 1928, Paramount Record Company issued a booklet entitled The Paramount Book of the Blues,²⁹ which featured photographs, background information, and selected songs of Lemon Jefferson, Ma Rainey, Blind Blake, Ida Cox, Charlie Jackson, and Elzadie Robinson.

Undoubtedly, these printed texts and tunes were used by singers, just as were the records. Dorothy Scarborough was the first to see the importance of sheet music to the transmission of the blues:

Even though specific blues may start indeed as sheet music, composed by identifiable authors, they are quickly caught up by popular fancy and so changed by oral transmission that one would scarcely recognize the relation between the original and the final results--if any results ever could be considered final.³⁰

and more recently, Samuel B. Charters has pointed out the influence of the printed blues.³¹

²⁷ Negro Workaday Songs, p. 21. The hits referred to here are the vaudeville blues songs.

²⁸ Fare-Thee Honey Blues (New York: Perry Bradford Music Co., 1920). This sheet music may be found in the Starr Collection of Sheet Music in the Lilly Library, Indiana University.

²⁹ The Paramount Book of the Blues (Port Washington, Wisc.: New York Recording Laboratories, [1928]).

³⁰ On the Trail of Negro Folk-Songs (1925; rpt. Hatboro, Pa.: Folklore Associates, 1963), p. 272.

³¹ The Country Blues (New York: Rinehart, 1959), p. 43.

Another means of transmitting the race record blues was through the juke box. Some form of juke box has been in existence since the 1890's, but it did not flourish as a widespread popular medium until the 1930's. By 1939, there were 225,000 juke boxes in the United States,³² and a proportionate number of these machines catered to black audiences. It is reported that Blind Boy Fuller learned many of his blues from juke boxes, or "piccolos," as they were sometimes known,³³ and this could no doubt also be said of many other singers as well.

The blues singers would not necessarily copy the recorded or printed songs verbatim. They would adapt them to their own styles and their own sense of what a blues should be; or they would take parts of the recorded song or just the themes or ideas in the songs when creating their own blues. Skip James admitted listening to records by Blind Lemon Jefferson and other artists, but only for the purpose of "playing them better."³⁴ Sam Chatmon points out that straight copying from a record would not necessarily please either the performer or his audience:

When I first started off playing I tried to play like Blind Lemon and Lonnie Johnson but everytime I'd go out an' pick guitar people would say: "Oh, he plays like Blind Lemon" or: "He plays like Lonnie Johnson." So I just quit and made me a way of my own.³⁵

Just as the recording affected the performer's repertoire and style, it affected non-recording performance situations. Once a singer became associated with a song he had recorded, his audience would want to hear

³² Ronald Gelatt, The Fabulous Phonograph: From Edison to Stereo, rev. ed. (New York: Appleton-Century, 1954), p. 272.

³³ Bastin, Crying for the Carolines, p. 18.

³⁴ Jacques Roche, "Henry Stuckey: An Obituary," 78 Quarterly, 1, No. 2 (1968), [14].

³⁵ Stephen Calt, record notes to Blue Goose 2006.

him sing that song during his live performances, and would expect it to be sung in the same way as they remembered it from the record. Mamie Smith expressed this point when she said, "They [the public] have heard my phonograph records and they want to hear me sing these songs the same as I do in my own studio in New York."³⁶

This was an added constraint on the performer, especially if that performer was not used to singing fixed-text blues. Furry Lewis commented that since his audience expected to hear what he had recorded, he had to memorize set texts.³⁷ In writing about post-war singer, Lightnin' Slim, Mike Leadbitter points out some of the problems which also must have faced pre-war free-improvisers:

When a session was scheduled, [J. D.] Miller would phone Slim at Baton Rouge and he would come over by bus, bringing Lazy Lester with him. If no song was ready to rehearse, Jay [Miller] would suggest a theme and Slim would improvise. When a blues was ready to tape, he would have to relearn the words, as he could never sing the same song the same way twice. Thus, when a record was released, Slim would have to take a copy home to learn the words again in case an audience should request that song!³⁸

Another possibility was that an audience would want to hear one performer sing a blues which they had heard some other artist sing on record. In order to keep up with such requests, bluesmen had to actively learn popular blues songs off of records. Such was the case with Skip James:

James set out for Paramount's Grafton, Wisconsin studio by train in early 1931 in the deluded belief that recording for such a label was a prelude to Hollywood fame. He was gratified when a couple sitting behind him noticed his Stella guitar (a gift from Speir)

³⁶ Ronald C. Foreman, "Jazz and Race Records, 1920-32: Their Origins and Their Significance for the Record Industry and Society," Biss. Univ. of Illinois 1968, p. 59.

³⁷ Titon, Early Down Home Blues.

³⁸ Crowley, Louisiana Blues (Bexhill-On-Sea, U.K.: Blues Unlimited, 1968), p. 12.

and asked him to play Ethel Waters' "Am I Blue?": "I sing a couple of verses and then I taken a flute (kazoo) and blowed it;" he later recalled. "And oh boy! Did they enjoy it! Quite naturally since I was gonna put out records then, I wanted them to hear some of my music 'cause they might have bought several."³⁹

This quote exhibits two constraints placed on the singer by the recording medium: he had to play the recorded songs which his audience requested, and he had to advertise himself in order to sell records.

There were further changes in the performer's singing habits brought about by recording. He might be more secretive about his material, because of the constant pressure from the record companies to produce new songs. He might have been less likely to reveal a new song at a jam session, or other contexts where competing singers might overhear him. Rubin Lacy makes this point:

Before they started to making these records, the biggest of them boys that played music with me would help anybody to learn. But I reckon after they started to making records they got jealous, I guess, thought the other fellow would steal his songs.⁴⁰

The recording also, in effect, became a performer for the passive audiences that listened to it, and therefore created its own performance contexts:

The records had their own audiences and generated their own in-culture situations. For example, many women who enjoyed the music but thought it wrong to attend the Saturday night parties were able to listen to the music on records.⁴¹

Parties or get-togethers were arranged purely for listening to recordings. Fred McDowell recalls this context:

³⁹ Stephen Calt, record notes to Biograph BLP-12029.

⁴⁰ David Evans, "The Rev. Reubin Lacy--Part 2," Blues Unlimited, No. 41 (Feb. 1966), p. 8.

⁴¹ Jeff Titon, rev. of Charley Patton, by John Fahey, JEMF Quarterly, 7 (1971), 192.

We had those wind-up victrolas, wasn't no electricity then, y'understand. We would maybe stop by after work at someone's house who had one; this'd be on a week night; and we'd listen there. Wouldn't be no dancing, just a small bunch of us gathered around listening in the shack.⁴²

In a similar context, Booker White recalls being unable to enter a room where the latest Charley Patton record was playing because of the crowd.⁴³

The recording could also replace the live performer in some of the contexts discussed earlier. Leonard "Baby Doo" Caston recalls that portable wind-up gramophones would be brought to house parties where there was no live entertainment, and that, on occasion, the record player was carried out onto the street in streetsinging contexts.⁴⁴ Jeff Titon points out that since "the [record] players were actuated by spring motors the small models could be taken outside to picnics, parties, and other social affairs where music was popular and local singers were unattainable."⁴⁵

The record could not, of course, fulfill all the functions of a live performer in these contexts, but one wonders if the blues singer had to compete with the record for audiences. Unfortunately, there is no evidence one way or the other on this point, but in house rent party contexts, or in bordellos and gambling dens, records could conceivably have been used in order to save the expense of hiring a live performer.

The recording influenced the stage show context in quite a different

⁴² Titon, Early Down Home Blues.

⁴³ Simon A. Napier, "The Story of Bukka White," Blues Unlimited, No. 7 (Dec. 1963), p. 3.

⁴⁴ Jeff Titon, ed., From Blues to Pop: The Autobiography of Leonard "Baby Doo" Caston, JEMF Special Series, No. 4 (Los Angeles: John Edwards Memorial Foundation, 1974), p. 4.

⁴⁵ Titon, Early Down Home Blues.

manner. Setting a phonograph on stage to perform in place of live talent would be ludicrous in such a context, but the recording was used as a theme or prop by those singers who were known as recording artists.

Thomas Dorsey recalls that for Ma Rainey's stage show, "we carried two or three of our own drops, you know, to change scenery. She had her own drop, with the picture of the Paramount Records label painted on her drop . . ."⁴⁶ Another of Rainey's props was a large fake phonograph from which she would emerge singing.⁴⁷

Bessie Smith went further in incorporating the recording context into her stage shows:

Traveling with a portable mock-up of the strange looking acoustical recording equipment, she would explain to her audiences how records were made by singing into the big horn, as if she were actually recording. Much of her repertoire was chosen from her recorded material in the hope of boosting record sales.⁴⁸

There was at least one instance of records being made part of the theme of a stage show comic monologue. Veteran vaudeville comedian, Jackie "Moms" Mabley, used the recording context in this part of her monologue:

A child is born with a brain, but not a mind. It's like when you're making records. You go in a sound-proof room. Then the first noise that's made, the first word that you speak, that needle starts turning like the heart, that record starts registering. Whether a baby can answer you back or not, it's digging everything you're putting down from them first words.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Jim O'Neal and Amy O'Neal, "Living Blues Interview: Georgia Tom Dorsey," Living Blues, No. 20 (Mar.-April 1975), p. 23.

⁴⁷ Paul Oliver, Conversation with the Blues (New York: Horizon Press, 1965), pp. 132-33.

⁴⁸ Chris Albertson, record notes to Columbia 6-30126.

⁴⁹ Langston Hughes and Arna Bontemps, The Book of Negro Folklore (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1958), p. 496.

Whether the recording was a common theme in stage shows is very hard to determine, since the history of black vaudeville is quite sketchy.

In recorded blues itself, there was very little mention made of the recording context. Sleepy John Estes alludes to the recording context in the last stanza of "Special Agent":

Now special agent special agent put me off close to some town
Now I got to do some recording, and I ought to be recording right
now (ESTE-34)

and, in a more obscure reference, Tommy McClennan sings about the record label, he is recording for:

Bluebird Bluebird please fly down south for me
If you don't find me anywhere on the M & O, you'll find me
somewhere on the Santa Fe (McCL-23)

Perhaps the only recorded blues which has the recording context as its entire theme is Robert Johnson's "Phonograph Blues" (JOHR-10), in which the phonograph is used as a vehicle for sexual imagery.

Although there are many instances in which the recording context directly affected other contexts, the reverse situation is quite rare.

After a recording session in New York in 1934, Bertha Lee Patton recalled:

Then after we'd [Bertha and Charley Patton] finish [recording] we had dances for Mr. Callaway [A & R man] and them every evening in the studio.⁵⁰

Whether this was a rare occurrence or not is impossible to say.

The blues is truly a twentieth century folksong phenomenon. Its transmission, diffusion, and performance are all inextricably tied to the twentieth century mass media of records and radio, as well as the older medium of the broadsheet. To attempt to define the blues and not take this fact into account would make the scholarly study of the subject

⁵⁰ Samuel B. Charters, The Bluesmen (New York: Oak Publications, 1967), p. 54.

not only unrewarding and unfulfilling, but very much misguided. As early as 1935, Guy B. Johnson admitted this point, albeit reluctantly:

It is a bit confusing to the folk-song collector who tries to keep origins and paths of diffusion straight, but to the folk it makes no difference. The phonograph and radio blues are rapidly becoming at home in the folk tradition.⁵¹

⁵¹ "Negro Folk Songs," pp. 558-59.

IX THE PERFORMER CONTEXT OF THE BLUES

Just as the blues has been defined in terms of its historical, geographical, cultural and performance contexts, it must be placed within its performer context. What kind of person sang the blues and what was that person's role within his culture? Alan P. Merriam discusses this aspect of folksong in a chapter entitled "Social Behavior: The Musician": "As a musician, he plays a specific role and may hold a specific status within his society, and his role and status are determined by the consensus of the society as to what should be proper behavior for the musician."¹

The blues singer was a verbal craftsman and, as such, held a special place within black society. He was recognized by the people as possessing a special talent and fulfilling a unique role in the community. It is difficult, however, to make generalizations about the blues singer's personality, or his physical and psychological make-up. There seem to be no traits of character which are specific to the bluesman in black culture, or which clearly differentiate him from other, less gifted, members of his community.

In describing the Newfoundland singer, Paulie Hall, John Szwed wrote, "From what little we know of song-makers elsewhere, Paulie Hall is typical in being seen as an eccentric and in being held somewhat apart from the community around him."² There is no evidence, however, that the blues singer fits this "typical" role of the eccentric. Some were ramblers and beggars who may well have been considered eccentric, but others

¹ The Anthropology of Music (Evanston: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1964), p. 123.

² "Paul E. Hall: A Newfoundland Song-Maker and His Community of Song," in Folksongs and Their Makers, ed. Henry Glassie, Edward D. Ives, and John F. Szwed (Bowling Green: Bowling Green Univ. Popular Press, [1970]), p. 157.

seem to have been well-accepted "ordinary" members of their community.

Although the romantic vision of the blues singer often portrays a rowdy, hard-drinking, somewhat violent character, there is no reason to believe that this is an accurate description of the blues performer. Some singers, such as Sonny Boy Williamson and Leroy Carr were generally described as friendly, mild-mannered men. Other performers, such as Charley Patton or Bessie Smith, seem to have had more violent and explosive personalities. Many singers were heavy drinkers, but others, as has already been pointed out (pp. 139-40), were teetotallers.

There is very little information on how the blues singer wished to be portrayed, or how he perceived his stage personality. Perhaps the clearest statement we have on this point was made by Bill Broonzy:

But when you write about me, please don't say I'm a jazz musician. Don't say I'm a musician or guitar player--just write Big Bill was a well-known blues singer and player and has recorded 260 blues songs from 1925 up till 1952; he was a happy man when he was drunk and playing with women; he was liked by all the blues singers, some would get a little jealous sometimes but Bill would buy a bottle of whisky and they all would start laughing and playing again, Big Bill would get drunk and slip off from the party and go home to sleep.³

Broonzy conveyed the image of someone who was a drinker and a "womanizer," but, at the same time, someone who was outgoing, friendly, and non-violent. It is also interesting to note that he regarded his verbal craftsmanship as of much greater importance than his musicianship in terms of his own self-assessment.

The blues singer's audience may or may not have agreed with Broonzy's analysis of the performer's character; there is little information available on this subject. There is one trait of character, however, which is al-

³ William Broonzy, *Big Bill Blues: William Broonzy's Story*, ed. Yannick Bruynoghe (1955; rpt. New York: Oak Publications, 1964), pp. 151-52.

most universally associated with the blues singer: laziness or distaste for hard work. It was generally believed that the bluesman detested manual labour, or work of any sort, and therefore became a singer to earn his living.

Charley Patton was said to have "detested and avoided manual labour,"⁴ and Tommy Johnson's brother, LeDell, similarly stated that "Tom wouldn't pick up a shoe for nobody. He didn't do no kind of work."⁵ Son House remembers that Robert Johnson "didn't care anything about working in the fields . . . Didn't want to work on any farms."⁶ The same has been said of Peetie Wheatstraw and Memphis Minnie,⁷ and no doubt was said of many other singers as well.

The blues singers themselves were the first to admit that they disliked and avoided hard work. Walter Vinson stated that he became a musician because he "got tired of smellin' mule farts,"⁸ and Romeo Nelson said, "I never was much for hard work . . . that's why I took up piano in the first place."⁹ This character trait was perhaps the only aspect of the singer's personality which differentiated him at all from other members of his culture, but it was an important difference, as William

⁴ John Fahey, Charley Patton (London: Studio Vista, 1970), p. 28.

⁵ David Evans, Tommy Johnson (London: Studio Vista, 1971), p. 37.

⁶ Samuel B. Charters, Robert Johnson (New York: Oak Publications, and London: Music Sales Ltd., 1973), p. 7.

⁷ Paul Garon, The Devil's Son-In-Law: The Story of Peetie Wheatstraw and His Songs (London: Studio Vista, 1971), p. 92; and Mike Leadbitter, "In My Girlish Days," Blues Unlimited, No. 78 (Dec. 1970), p. 8, respectively.

⁸ Stephen Calt, Michael Stewart, and Don Kent, record notes to Mamlash S-3804.

⁹ Tracy Nelson, record notes to Origin Jazz Library OJL-15.

ferris pointed out: "Thus the blues player stood conspicuously apart from the rest of the black community and used his musical abilities to avoid the heavy manual labor which was the fate of most blacks in the rural South."¹⁰

It might be said, however, that it was not so much the character trait of laziness which separated the blues singers from others in the community as much as their ability to escape hard work through their music. There were probably many blacks who did not particularly enjoy their employment, but few could afford to abandon their work to pursue a career as a professional entertainer. The blues singer was exceptional in this respect.

This point leads to one generalization which can be made about the race record blues singer: he was a professional performer. The term "professional," however, is not at all precise. It is truly difficult to determine when a performer moves from amateur to professional status as Merriam has pointed out:

If every group holds the musical abilities of some of its members to be greater than that of others, it follows that in some groups such individuals must stand out more sharply than in others. Here we begin to approach professionalism, which is usually defined in terms of whether the musician is paid for and supported economically by his skill. If our criterion be economic, however, there must be a number of degrees of professionalism; in fact, professionalism seems to run along a continuum from payment in occasional gifts at one end to complete economic support through music at the other. It is difficult to know at what point professionalism begins and ends, and the problem of precise definition is as apparent in our own society as it is in others. (pp. 124-25)

Almost all of the blues singers who made records seemed to have fallen somewhere on the professionalism continuum, and most of these artists could be placed at the upper end of the spectrum.

¹⁰ Blues from the Delta (London: Studio Vista, 1970), p. 29.

Although a few singers, such as John Hurt, may have rarely gone beyond the "occasional gifts" stage of professionalism, most played, in some capacity, for money.¹¹ Thus Christopher Lomell's contention that blues singers were primarily labourers who performed only as a side-line occupation describes only a small portion of the singers who made race records.¹²

Even those few artists at the lower end of the professionalism continuum considered themselves at least semi-professionals, for they asked for food, drink, and a little money in exchange for their services,¹³ and their perceptions of themselves as at least semi-professionals must not be overlooked in defining the performer context of the blues. Perhaps Paul Oliver best describes the lower end of the blues professionalism continuum:

Professional, that is, in that they earned their living by singing and playing, but still essentially folk musicians. At the lower end of entertainment these included the saw-mill and levee camp pianists, the wandering juke and country supper guitarists, the entertainers on doctor shows, minstrel shows and excursion trips alike. The transition from casual to "professional" playing of this category was a slow one and in very many instances never attained or intended, although the singer supplemented his wage packet by playing.¹⁴

¹¹ The only study of the economics of blues singing is a paper by Barry Lee Pearson, "The Wages of Sin," read at the American Folklore Society Annual Meeting, New Orleans, 23 Oct. 1975. For a discussion of amateur-professional status among white musicians, see Neil V. Rosenberg, "Repertoire, Style and Role: Amateur and Professional Folk Musicians," paper read at the American Folklore Society Annual Meeting, Austin, 1972.

¹² "The Effects of Social and Economic Change on the Use of the Blues," *JEMF Quarterly*, 11 (1975), 43-48.

¹³ Jeff Titon, Early Down Home Blues: A Musical and Cultural Analysis (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, forthcoming).

¹⁴ Conversation with the Blues (New York: Horizon Press, 1965), p. 13.

For the most part, however, the blues singer was more than just a semi-professional who used his talent to supplement a salary earned in other types of labour. He was a true professional who, if anything, used the wages from manual labour to supplement the income he made from entertaining. As Calt wrote, "the country bluesman was first and foremost a tradesman,"¹⁵ and his ability to perform was his stock in trade.

The impression that the blues singer was only a part-time performer is derived from the present employment of those artists who are still alive. There is not the market today for the type of performance that most of these singers specialized in, so that most of them now have non-entertainment employment. In the historical period with which this study is concerned, however, the bluesman could and did earn his living from his singing. The economic hardships suffered by the blacks in the 1920's and 1930's made performing a viable alternative to other kinds of work. H. C. Speir observed that "blues-singing was brought about more or less I would say by . . . being poor; singing blues would make money, understand."¹⁶

The professional singer could, in fact, make a much better living than others in his community. Calt's claim that the bluesman could make the equivalent of one week's salary of a sharecropper in one night's work may not be an exaggeration.¹⁷ In remembering his medicine show days, Gus Cannon said, "We'd make \$10/15 a week . . . that was good money at that time."¹⁸

¹⁵ Stephen Grossman, Stephen Calt, and Hal Grossman, Country Blues Songbook (New York: Oak Publication, 1973), p. 12.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 12. Ellipsis is sic.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

¹⁸ Bengt Olsson, "Biography," record notes to Herwin 208. Ellipsis is sic.

Of course, by definition, the blues singers who recorded were professionals, since they were paid to sing by the record companies, but as has been shown, most of their income derived from various types of live performances. These professionals can be sub-divided into categories in a number of different ways, depending upon which context or contexts they performed in, whether they lived in urban or rural areas, their income, their geographic region, or even their sex. In terms of the text and texture of the blues they sang, however, there is really very little difference between these various categories.

Perhaps the only group of singers which clearly stand apart from the other professionals are the vaudeville singers. It has already been noted that a number of their songs only partially fulfill the textural criteria set down in this definition of the blues (pp. 45-46). Many of their songs, however, cannot be distinguished from those of other performers and, conversely, other types of performers were also capable of singing these "partial" blues.

Other generalizations which can be made about the vaudeville singers are that the majority of them were women, most lived and worked in urban areas, and most made a relatively high income in comparison with non-vaudeville blues singers. But there are exceptions to all of these assertions. Male singer, Frankie "Half Pint" Jaxon, could be classified as a vaudeville singer; Ma Rainey, although a vaudeville singer, preferred to work in the rural South; and the incomes of such non-vaudeville performers as Blind Lemon Jefferson or Big Bill Broonzy rivalled those of the vaudeville artists.

For the purposes of this study, the similarities between the various kinds of blues singers are of much more importance than the differences. Regardless of the performance contexts of the singers, they all sang the

blues, and, from a textual and textural point of view, these blues songs are usually indistinguishable from each other.

What was the status of the bluesman as a professional within his culture? Merriam has pointed out that jazz came to symbolize evil or depraved behaviour in mainstream American culture in the 1920's and 1930's (pp. 241-44), and consequently the jazz musician's status within this culture was fairly low. The jazz musician was equated, to some extent, with the criminal underworld, and many of them accepted and built upon this stereotype. The blurb on the back of Mezz Mezzrow's autobiography re-enforces this stereotype of the jazzman:

Call it an authentic human document. Call it the modern Odyssey of an old-time jail-happy jazzman who spiked beer for Al Capone, smoked opium with the Purple Gang, peddled marijuana in Harlem (the law got him for that), played clarinet in dives high and low, married across the color line, today heads a jazz record company!¹⁹

Note that his criminal activity and taboo behaviour overshadow his musicianship or business acumen in this description. Mezzrow, in turn, enhances his own anti-social image in his life story.

The blues singer, however, does not seem to have shared this stereotype (remember Broonzy's insistence on not being labelled a "jazz" musician.) Undoubtedly among the more religious people in black society the blues singer was seen as a sinner or backslider, since the blues' highly secular nature made it antithetical to the music of the church. Indeed, the blues was often referred to as the Devil's music. But everyone was a sinner to some degree and were more to be pitied than shunned. There is no reason to believe that blues singers were outcasts in black society.

¹⁹ Milton "Mezz" Mezzrow and Bernard Wolfe, Really the Blues (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1946), back cover.

Certainly, there were some performance contexts which tended to lower the status of the singer in the eyes of society. Streetsinging was probably not considered a very worthy occupation and, in fact, may well have been contrary to the local laws or social mores in some areas. Blind Boy Fuller had to get permission from the authorities in order to play on the street, as this letter attests:

April 8, 1933
Mr. G. W. Proctor
Chief of Police
Durham, N. C.

In re: Fulton Allen (Col.)
606 Cameron Avenue
City

Dear Mr. Proctor:

If it meets with your approval we are glad to recommend that the above named man be allowed to make music on the streets of Durham at a place designed by you.

Assuring you that we are always glad to cooperate with you.

I am

Yours very truly,
W. E. Stanley,
Supt. Public Welfare²⁰

Because of the secular nature of the blues and the "streetsinger" image of the performer in the minds of some people in black society, the young aspiring blues singer might be discouraged or prevented from playing by his family. Singer Henry Stuckey had to steal his protege, Skip James, away from his family at night in order for them to play at local barrel-houses.²¹ Others, however, encouraged talented youngsters in their family to become professionals for practical economic reasons. Jaybird Coleman's parents "encouraged his musical interests, as they wanted him to become rich and famous so that he wouldn't have to work his fingers to the bones making the measly wages of a sharecropper."²² Similarly, Mem-

²⁰ Bill Phillips, "Piedmont Country Blues," Southern Exposure, 2, No. 1 (1975), 61.

²¹ Jacques Roche, "Henry Stuckey: An Obituary," 78 Quarterly, 1, No. 2 (1968), 133.

²² Pat Cather, "Birmingham Blues: The Story of Jaybird Coleman," Music Memories, Sept. 1962, rpt. in Back Woods Blues, ed. Simon A. Napier (Bexhill-On-Sea?, U.K.: Blues Unlimited, 1968), p. 5.

this Minnie's family encouraged her to become a professional performer because "none of them were at all musical and were proud of Minnie's talent."²³

If the status of streetsingers was relatively low in black society, those who performed in other contexts were highly-regarded members of the community. Vaudeville singers, such as Bessie Smith or Ethel Waters, were celebrities who gathered crowds when they were recognized in the street, in the same way as do movie stars. Blues singers who performed on record were also held in high regard by blacks, and the families of talented children would encourage them to follow in the paths of recording artists, as did Victoria Spivey's family:

My brothers said to my mother, "Well, if Sippie Wallace can go and sing, and I know that my sister can sing as well as she can, we'll send her to St. Louis." And well, they got together and they sent me to St. Louis, Missouri, and I was just about fifteen-years old.²⁴

Making a record was something performers aspired to in order to gain greater status in their community. Odum's informant, Left-Wing Gordon, expresses the generally-held view that recording a blues led to instant fame:

Well now, niggers, I'll tell you sho' 'nough story. Las' few years I been such a travelin' man I been think' 'bout writin' out story myself. Seems 'like lot other colored-folks writin' now an' specially singin' Blues on records. When my Blues come out folks gonna set to 'em.²⁵

These dreams of fame could become rather exaggerated in the mind of the

²³ Leadbitter, "My Girlish Days," p. 8.

²⁴ Oliver, Conversation with the Blues, p. 112.

²⁵ Howard W. Odum, Rainbow Round My Shoulder: The Blue Trail of Black Ulysses (n.p.: Grosset & Dunlap by arrangement with Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1928), p. 201.

inexperienced blues singer. For example, Skip James believed that recording blues for Paramount would eventually lead to fame in Hollywood.²⁶

But if there was not instant and everlasting fame in becoming a recording artist, there were more modest benefits. Once a singer had recorded, he was assumed to have reached a certain level of proficiency, which put him a cut above those singers who had not made records. Ishmon Bracey recalls that "They used to say Mager [Johnson] was the best. But after Tommy [Johnson] put out those records, you know, that did boost him up more. But Mager was good."²⁷

The status gained by making a record was used by the performer to good benefit in other performance contexts. Romeo Nelson recalled that the result of his recording was that he could demand higher prices for house party performances.²⁸ After their very successful recording of "Tight Like That," Thomas Dorsey and Tampa Red were able to fill houses on the T.O.B.A. circuit.²⁹ David Evans makes this same point about Tommy Johnson:

... sales of his three issued records, however, was sufficient to establish Johnson's reputation as a good blues singer in Mississippi and helped to spread some of his songs in the folk blues tradition. He capitalised on his fame by running a small cafe in South Jackson and playing music in it and on the streets nearby.³⁰

Those performers who had not made records also recognized the higher status of the recorded singer. Lazy Bill Lucas recalls, "I counted it

²⁶ Stephen Calt, record notes to Biograph BLP-12029.

²⁷ Tommy Johnson, p. 31.

²⁸ Tracy Nelson, record notes to Origin Jazz Library OJL-15.

²⁹ Jim O'Neal and Amy O'Neal, "Living Blues Interview: Georgia Tom Dorsey," Living Blues, No. 20 (Mar.-April 1975), p. 25.

³⁰ Tommy Johnson, p. 61.

an honor to be playin' [with] Big Joe Williams 'cause I had heard his records while I was still down South.³¹ The raising of status of one performer might also be resented by another who felt that he was an equally capable singer, but who had not had the chance to record. Elmore James apparently felt some resentment towards his sometime partner, Robert Johnson, because of this fact.³² Knowing that recorded performers received more attention and acclaim, some bluesmen tried to impersonate these artists, and, in the case of Rice Miller, even took the name of an already established recording artist:

Rice Miller was broadcasting under the pseudonym of Sonny Boy Williamson--"King of Harmonica"--and that was a heavy name to lay on the listeners. Yes, people listened, were impressed that KFFA had a big record star on their books and bought King Biscuit Flour because Sonny Boy himself recommended it.³³

The recording artist recognized that his status had been raised in the eyes of the community, and made every effort to maintain this image. On a tour of the South, Walter Davis and Henry Townsend displayed their new status with appropriate ostentation: "They toured Missouri, Tennessee, Mississippi and Texas in Davis' Cadillac, a status symbol which impressed his relatives back in Grenada, Mississippi and finally convinced them that he was famous."³⁴ This fame could even lead to a prima donna attitude, often associated with the successful vaudeville singers; but this attitude

³¹ Jeff Titon, "Calling All Cows": Lazy Bill Lucas," Blues Unlimited, No. 60 (Mar. 1969), p. 11.

³² Mike Leadbitter, Delta Country Blues (Bexhill-On-Sea, U.K.: Blues Unlimited, 1968), p. 17.

³³ Mike Leadbitter, "Bring It On Home," Blues Unlimited, No. 98 (Jan. 1973), p. 4.

³⁴ Neil Slaven, record notes to RCA International (Camden) INT-1085.

was found among the rural bluesmen as well. Note the attitude of Bo Carter:

Tell ya, we was the Mississippi Sheiks and when we went to make records in Jackson, Mississippi, the feller wanted to show us how to stop and start the records. Try to tell us when we got to begin and how we got to end. And you know, I started not to make 'em! I started not to make 'em 'cause he wasn't no musicianer, so how could he tell me how to stop and start the song? We was the Sheiks, Mississippi Sheiks and you know we was famous.³⁵

The recording context, then, represented the highest possible status a blues performer could reach, and the recording of a singer often marked the high point of the bluesman's professional career. Attaining this high point, in turn, bettered the singer's chances of making a living in non-recording contexts, since he would be more well-known, held in higher esteem in his community, and, thus, be in more demand.

Up to this point, we have viewed the performer as a "blues singer." It must be remembered, however, that few if any of the artists described in this study sang only the blues. These performers were, in fact, highly eclectic in their choice of material. Their recorded repertoire, in most cases, was not truly representative, for as has been previously pointed out, the record companies were interested in only certain segments of the singer's repertoire. Rosenberg makes this very point:

One seldom obtains documentation of the full repertory of commercial folk artists, but it appears that most of them recorded commercially only a portion of their repertory. The same artist, when approached by field collectors, often gave a different portion of their repertory.³⁶

The eclectic nature of their repertoires was not merely a function of their personal aesthetics. As professionals, these singers had to learn

³⁵ Oliver, Conversation with the Blues, p. 119.

³⁶ Neil V. Rosenberg, "Biblio-Discographies: The 'Whitehouse Blues'--'McKinley'--'Cannonball Blues' Complex," JEMF Newsletter, 4, No. 2 (1968), 46.

to cater to the different types of audiences which they faced. Singer,

Rosa Lee Hill, explains this phenomenon:

We played the blues for them that wanted to hear it, and them that liked church songs, we'd play them. Just like we'd go to their house, they wanted blues, we'd play it. And if we go to white people's houses, they wanted waltzes, foxtrots, we'd, we'd play that for them. And then we'd go to older people's houses, they wanted church songs, well, all of us would get together and sing and play that.³⁷

Carl Martin gives a similar explanation of his repertoire:

When you play music for your living you play what the people want; that's the way I always tried to figure for myself. Anything they want--if it was weddings, dances, breakdowns, churches, anything they sent for me to come and play. That's why I learned to play so well, 'cause I practised all kinds of music. Then when I came to Chicago, I go to the Polish neighborhood, go to the Irish neighborhood, I go in the German neighborhood, go in the Italian neighborhood; I had to learn to play all their musics.³⁸

In another interview, Martin added: "if you asked me a request today and I didn't know it, I'd go get the sheet music tomorrow and learn it so I wouldn't be caught the next time."³⁹

These statements bring out a further fact about blues singers: although, as race record artists, they catered to all-black audiences; in other contexts they played for white audiences, and with white musicians. Comber and Paris have written that the "interaction between white and black musicians, including mutual borrowing of lyrics, has by no means been rare, and it constitutes a field of study well known to folksong scholars."⁴⁰

³⁷ George Mitchell, "Rosa Lee Hill," Blues Unlimited, No. 60 (Mar. 1969), p. 4.

³⁸ Pete Welding, "An Interview with Carl Martin," 78 Quarterly, 1, No. 2 (1968), p. 11.

³⁹ Titon, Early Down Home Blues.

⁴⁰ Chris Comber and Mike Paris, "Jimmie Rodgers," in Stars of Country Music: Uncle Dave Macon to Johnny Rodriguez, ed. Bill C. Malone and Judith McCulloh (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1975), p. 131. For other studies of the mutual influences of black and white performers, see John

Given this fact, it is quite understandable that blues singers were influenced by white song traditions, and that they readily added white songs to their repertoires. Russell has stated that "there were dozens of hillbilly records on the market before the black singers of the south ever got on disc; a rural black in search of traditional music before about 1926 would have to be satisfied with white artists."⁴¹ But it was not just a matter of the blacks being a captive audience for white groups; even after race records became popular, blacks continued to buy records by white artists in order to satisfy their eclectic tastes. For example, white singer, Jimmie Rodgers, had a large following in black communities, and blues singers not only bought his records and knew his songs, but even on occasion accompanied him.⁴²

Music and song, then, was one of the few areas in which blacks and whites could comfortably interact with each other. This is not to say that music promoted brotherhood, equality, or friendship between the races; more accurately, the two cultures were able to understand and appreciate each other's song traditions, and their tastes tended to overlap to a great extent. The performer, whether black or white, had to understand this fact, and had to shape his repertoire accordingly. Johnny Shines' statement about bluesman Robert Johnson, then, should come as no

Cohen, "The Folk Music Interchange: Negro and White," *Sing Out!* 14, No. 6 (1964), 42-49; John S. Otto and Augustus M. Burns, "John 'Knocky' Parker--A Case of White and Black Musical Interaction," *JEMF Quarterly*, 10 (1974) 23-26; and Tony Russell, Blacks Whites and Blues (New York: Stein and Day, 1970).

⁴¹ Blacks Whites and Blues, p. 24.

⁴² David Evans, "Black Musicians Remember Jimmie Rodgers," Old Time Music, No. 7 (Winter 1972-73), pp. 12-14.

surprise:

Robert didn't just perform his own songs. He did anything that he heard over the radio, ANYTHING that he heard. When I say "anything," I mean ANYTHING--popular songs, ballads, blues, anything.⁴³

The non-blues repertoire of blues singers included many different types of songs. First and foremost among them were probably religious songs. Record companies were generally receptive to this portion of the blues singer's repertoire, and most of the major race record blues artists recorded some religious songs. Singers such as Willie McTell and Charley Patton had a substantial number of gospel songs in their recorded repertoires, but Robert Hicks, Blind Lemon Jefferson, Memphis Minnie, Bessie Smith and other such unlikely "gospel singers" also recorded a few religious pieces.

It must be remembered that gospel songs were sung because of the popular demand for them, and not necessarily out of any religious conviction. Son House made this point:

And me and Charley and Willie, pary a one of us wasn't sanctified, but we's making out like it, you know to make the record. Charley, he started that (sings a little) . . . that's the way we sang it. So on record people didn't know no better. They figured we's three sanctified guys. We wasn't nothing but ol' whiskey drinkers and blues players.⁴⁴

Popular white songs also formed a large part of the artist's non-blues repertoire. Again, when playing before a white audience, it was necessary to know these songs:

Dewey Corley, who worked with both the Memphis Jug Band and the Beale Street Jug Band, recalls with amusement the "stag" parties at the Peabody Hotel]. They were patronized chiefly by businessmen,

⁴³ Pete Welding, "Ramblin' Johnny Shines," Living Blues, No. 22 (July-Aug. 1975), p. 29.

⁴⁴ Nick Perls, "Son House Interview--Part One," 78 Quarterly, 1 No. 1 (1967), 60. Ellipsis is sic.

who left their wives at home. Everybody became very drunk and very generous; the tips over-ran the musicians wages. The music most in demand at these parties was sentimental stuff and current popular hits, with occasional fast dance-numbers; and the jug bands could provide this sort of fare as efficiently as they could play the blues.⁴⁵

Sam Chatmon had similar memories:

Now when we [Mississippi Sheiks] moved to the Delta in Hollandale here, in '28, we got to playin' up at Leroy Percy Park for the white folks all the week. "Eyes of Blue," that's what we played for the white folks. "Dinah," that's another for the white folks. But we played blues for coloured.⁴⁶

Traditional white music was also a part of the blues singer's repertoire. Dorothy Scarborough was probably the first to point out the large number of Anglo-Celtic ballads sung by blacks,⁴⁷ but traditional white tunes such as "Turkey in the Straw," "Soldier's Joy," and "Mississippi Sawyer" could also be performed by bluesmen in the proper contexts.⁴⁸

More exotic song traditions were also a part of the blues singer's repertoire. Carl Martin was not the only bluesman to learn ethnic songs:

Outside the studio in the 1930's, Johnnie [Temple] played mostly for whites. He and the McCoys [Charlie and Wilbur] played for the notorious Capone Brothers, Willie and John. There were two guitars and a mandolin, and they played mostly Italian music and polkas, with Charlie McCoy on lead mandolin.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Bengt Olsson, Memphis Blues and Jug Bands (London: Studio Vista, 1970), pp. 23-24.

⁴⁶ Oliver, Conversation with the Blues, p. 46. For a general discussion of the different repertoires which blacks used in front of white and black audiences, see William R. Ferris, Jr., "Racial Repertoires Among Blues Performers," Ethnomusicology, 14 (1970), 439-49.

⁴⁷ On the Trail of Negro Folk-Songs (1925; rpt. Hatboro, Pa.: Folklore Associates, 1963), pp. 33-64.

⁴⁸ For a description of such a context, see Don Kent, "On the Trail of Luke Jordan," Blues Unlimited, No. 66 (Oct. 1969), p. 5.

⁴⁹ David Evans, "The Johnnie Temple Story," Blues Unlimited, No. 56 (Sept. 1968), p. 8.

Even light classical pieces were played, as Leonard Caston explains:

Things like "Dark Eyes" and Chopin "Till the End of Time"; I mean I don't play it exactly as written but I have my own version on it. And "Moonlight Sonata" and you know, those classical things that I do on piano.⁵⁰

A generalized picture of the blues performer, then, might include the following features. He was a verbal craftsman who was recognized as such by the community in which he lived. As a result of this recognition, he could usually rely on his musical skills to avoid manual labour and to make a living wage. Thus he was at least a semi-professional, but more often than not, he was a full-time professional performer. Whatever status and fame he accrued from his live performances were enhanced by his recordings, which in turn increased his chances of making a good living as a professional. As a professional (and as someone with a well-developed musical aesthetic), the blues singer learned to cater to different audiences by having an eclectic repertoire of songs and types of songs. He was, therefore, first and foremost a professional performer with several different kinds of audience, and he learned to anticipate the expectations of these different audiences. He may have been a blues specialist, but he was also a singer of gospel songs, ballads, popular white pieces, and perhaps even ethnic songs and light classical works.

⁵⁰ Jeff Titon, ed., *From Blues to Pop: The Autobiography of Leonard "Baby Doo" Caston*, JEMF Special Series, No. 4 (Los Angeles: John Edwards Memorial Foundation, 1974), p. 25.

PART TWO: A STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF THE BLUES

X COMPOSING RACE RECORD 'BLUES'

In Part One of this study, we saw that the recording context encouraged originality and innovation in blues performance, which meant that singers had to concentrate harder on the lyrics of race record blues than they did in other types of performance contexts. Race record performers spent considerable time rehearsing their material, timing and refining their songs to meet the requirements of the record companies. These factors worked against spontaneously composed songs and it would seem that in a majority of cases, the blues singer prepared the text of his song well ahead of the recording date.

The image of the artist as a deliberate and careful composer who prepared his songs in advance of their recorded performance contrasts with the popular stereotype of the blues singer. The widely held perception of the blues singer is that of a performer who, without prior practice or thought, sang impromptu compositions into the recording microphone. Muriel Longini believed that the songs found on race records were purely oral in composition,¹ and Richard Middleton wrote that the "literate bluesman is rare, and playing off paper is felt to be incompatible with playing from the heart."² In actual fact, however, the race record artists were not above committing their songs to print, and were considerably more literate than the popular stereotype would lead one to believe.

The dividing-line between improvised and non-improvised song, however, is by no means clear. Absolute spontaneity in song composition is not

¹ "Folk Songs of Chicago Negroes," Journal of American Folklore, 52 (1939), 97.

² Pop Music and the Blues: A Study of the Relationship and Its Significance (London: Victor Gollancz, 1972), p. 51.

really possible, since with even the most impromptu performances, the singer unconsciously obeys certain rules of composition and adheres to certain cultural and personal aesthetics and expectations. No matter how spontaneous the performance, rules of structure, aesthetics, and behaviour are well-established before the first word is sung. Byrnside has made this point:

The improviser works within certain limits, and only by understanding how and in what ways these limits bind the improviser can we develop an appreciation of what he does. The fleeting, impermanent nature of improvisational compositions has on occasion led to the faulty notion that the improviser is a sort of musical free agent who is bound by no conventions and guided by no logic or canon, and who creates music by allowing various and sundry bits of inspiration to "pop into his mind" and out of his voice or instrument at one and the same time. But this is not what he actually does. In making his music the improviser cannot escape his own musical habits, his previous musical experiences, his personal performance facility and compositional procedures. The music he creates while improvising is conditioned by these things, and is, thus, considerably more reflective than purely spontaneous in nature.³

Bearing this in mind, the distinction between improvised and non-improvised song depends, to a large extent, upon the singer's own awareness of his creativity. If he begins a performance without any conscious preparation, no previously prepared text, and in the belief that his song is spontaneous, then his composition may be called improvised. If, however, he has a previously prepared text in mind, or if he has consciously rehearsed and readied his performance, then his song cannot be called improvised. As will be shown, race record artists generally fall into the latter category.

This is not to say that there was no improvisation in blues performance. In other performance contexts, spontaneous composition was quite

³ Ronald Byrnside, "The Performer as Creator: Jazz Improvisation," in *Contemporary Music and Music Cultures*, ed. Charles Hamm, Bruno Nettl, and Ronald Byrnside (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1975), p. 224.

common. LeDell Johnson remembers that his brother, Tommy Johnson, would "just set there and follow with his box, and he could make up a song in ten minutes,"⁴ and singer, James "Son" Thomas, said that "if I'm playing and don't know the song, I can add verses as I play. It come to me, the right verse of what to say and everything."⁵

Indeed, the talent to improvise is a common boast among blues singers. Blind Jimmie Brewer stated,

I sit down and make up a thousand songs . . . Anybody ask me what I did, I don't know, so you just got to give 'em a name . . . Because I don't know what it is, I'll just sing and play something. . . . Funny thing playing music--as long as I'm playing somebody else's records, I know what I'm gonna play, but when I gonna play something of my own, I don't know what it's gonna be until I start and playin' it.⁶

and T-Bone Walker similarly boasts,

I didn't know the words because there weren't any set words. I made them up as I went along. That's the way we do, you know. Right to-day I can make up blues faster than I can sing them. I could sing the blues for you a whole day and never repeat a verse.⁷

Furry Lewis also boasts of his improvisational prowess, but at the same time gives some indication of the workings of a singer's mind:

I can sing a song that I know already. But I can just sit here and sing a song I never sung in my life before, a song about this bed, that beer bottle there, a song about this television, anything. And the guitar got to keep up, 'cause I'm gonna make it. I just make up the words right quick, "Well, that ain't gonna match that." Then something come into your mind, and it's gonna get it to a "T."⁸

⁴ David Evans, Tommy Johnson (London: Studio Vista, 1971), p. 22.

⁵ William Ferris, Jr., Blues from the Delta (London: Studio Vista, 1970), p. 42.

⁶ Clas Ahlstrand, "Blind Jimmie Brewer," Blues Unlimited, No. 48 (Dec. 1967), p. 12.

⁷ Nat Shapiro and Nat Hentoff, eds., Hear Me Talkin' to Ya: The Story of Jazz by the Men Who Made It (New York: Rinehart, 1955), p. 249.

⁸ Bengt Olsson, Memphis Blues and Jug Bands (London: Studio Vista, 1970), pp. 72-73.

These artists are not, however, thinking in terms of the recording context. While they might be perfectly willing to improvise when playing in a juke joint or at a picnic, they would be more reticent about singing an unrehearsed, spontaneous blues in the recording studio. Even in non-recording contexts, the singer might feel the need to write down and preserve his lyrics. Booker White recalled that, while imprisoned at Parchman Farm, he "was writing songs and sticking them in a crack somewhere until I got out."⁹

Even though White was quite capable of improvising blues, in the recording studio he created his songs from written notes he had made to himself.¹⁰ White's written cue-cards indicate that some of his songs were partially spontaneous; that is, he knew in advance what he was going to sing about, and he might have even written down bits of lyrics, but the exact form and content of the song remained quite fluid until he actually started singing. Some singers, of course, did improvise in the recording studio. Willie Trice was quite "disturbed by Decca's habit of recording a number, playing back the 'mother' (thereby destroying it) so that the artist could see any weaknesses and then cutting another exactly the same. Easy for some, but not for Willie, who had difficulty remembering what he had sung on the first take!"¹¹

Jeff Titon has shown that the two widely divergent takes of "Match Box Blues" recorded by Blind Lemon Jefferson on the same day indicate

⁹ David Evans, "Booker White--Part 2," Blues Unlimited, No. 37 (Oct. 1966), p. 8.

¹⁰ David Evans, "Booker White--Part 3," Blues Unlimited, No. 38 (Nov. 1966), p. 7.

¹¹ Bruce Bastin, Crying for the Carolines (London: Studio Vista, 1971), pp. 36-37.

spontaneous, unrehearsed composition.¹² Yet the fact that Trice, Jefferson, and others were given several chances to sing their songs makes these performances different from true impromptu composition. The expectations of the record company officials and the atmosphere of the recording studio militated against improvisation and favoured carefully prepared texts. Indeed, it has already been pointed out that Jefferson had some of his songs whispered to him as he sang,¹³ which indicates that some of his blues were written down beforehand.

Some race record artists wrote down their blues simply to aid their memories as they sang, as did Mary Johnson: "I wrote down my own numbers at the time; I composed my own blues and I would just write them down and throw them away and I wouldn't think no more about them."¹⁴ But other singers were more methodical and were very much aware that committing their compositions to print was the first step towards achieving copyright. The Memphis Jug Band obviously had more than aiding their memories in mind when they wrote down their lyrics:

[Ralph] Peer would usually write Son [Will Shade] about two months in advance of a recording date, giving him time to rehearse the band. They'd go over to Son's house and work all day on a tune, singing it over ten and fifteen times, until they had it right.

¹² Early Down Home Blues: A Musical and Cultural Analysis (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, forthcoming).

¹³ Norm Cohen, "'I'm a Record Man--Uncle Art Satherley Reminisces," JEMF Quarterly, 8 (1972), 19; and Donald L. Nelson, "The West Virginia Snake Hunters: John and Emory McClung," JEMF Quarterly, 10 (1974), 72. Instances of singers reading their lyrics, or being prompted by others, before the microphone are also cited in William Broonzy, Big Bill Blues: William Broonzy's Story, ed. Yannick Bruynoghe (1955; rpt. New York: Oak Publications, 1964), p. 47; and Samuel B. Charters, The Country Blues (New York: Rinehart, 1959), p. 52.

¹⁴ Paul Oliver, Conversation with the Blues (New York: Horizon Press, 1965), p. 115.

Jennie [Clayton] would write down the words and when they had timed it, Son would write his 'ok' on the words, put the title on top and his name on the bottom, so that Peer's Southern Music Corporation could copyright it.¹⁵

Even those singer who, in other contexts, were not used to writing down their lyrics or rehearsing their songs often felt the need to do so before recording. Singers who were illiterate, or nearly illiterate, would employ an amanuensis to write down their lyrics. This was the case with Tommy Johnson, when he was preparing for a recording session:

Of course, he may have been asked by Speir to practise this time, but, for whatever reason it was, he went to Crystal Springs and engaged the help of some of his sisters and sisters-in law. Clarence's [Johnson's] wife Gertrude recalls helping Tommy on three songs. He would sing a line or stanza, and she would write it down and read it back. If Tommy didn't like it he would have her cross it out, and he would think of another until the song met with his satisfaction.¹⁶

In some cases, the "scribe" would become co-writer, or at least a creative helper to the blues singer. Broonzy said of Sonny Boy Williamson's wife: "She helped him writing his songs and helped him to learn how to sing them. She could rhyme a song and had wonderful handwriting."¹⁷ The helper could even be a record company official; H. C. Speir claims to have helped Kokomo Arnold write "Milk Cow Blues."¹⁸

Writing a blues song could also be a truly communal effort, especially among the more sophisticated urban race record artists. The team

¹⁵ Charters, *The Country Blues*, p. 115. Archie Green, *Only a Miner: Studies in Recorded Coal-Mining Songs* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1972), pp. 378-79, includes a photograph of a lead sheet and typescript of "Mining Camp Blues" by Trixie Smith, obviously made for copyright purposes. It contains two more stanzas than the recorded version of the song.

¹⁶ Evans, *Tommy Johnson*, p. 62.

¹⁷ *Big Bill Blues*, p. 121.

¹⁸ David Evans, "An Interview with H. C. Speir," *JEMF Quarterly*, 8 (1972), 120.

of Georgia Tom Dorsey and Tampa Red wrote blues in this way, as Dorsey recalls:

We'd do it together. I wrote most of the songs. I'm the one could write the music down. See I made the manuscript like that. Well, we both wrote lyrics. Tampa come up with some of the lyrics and if we didn't have no music, I'd write the music.¹⁹

Leroy Carr and Scrapper Blackwell used not only their own talents to create the blues, but sought help from others such as bluesman, Pete Franklin's mother, Flossie Franklin,²⁰ or Blackwell's sister, Minnie.²¹ Indeed, the communal composition of Carr and Blackwell was highly sophisticated:

As Scrapper describes it, the making of these blues resembled cultivated poet-craft rather than casual folk composition: they would sit for hours at a big dining room table, adding and taking out verses, crossing out and changing, getting the rhymes correct ("if you can't rhyme yourself, get a rhyming dictionary"), and finally, giving each blues a title.²²

Rural blues singers also made use of the communal method of song composition; for example, Robert Hicks, while on his way to a recording session, collaborated with another train passenger on the composition of "Mississippi Heavy Water Blues."²³

Not only did blues singers engage in communal composition, but as has already been pointed out, even the most creative artists sang songs which had been composed for them by someone else (see p. 172). This "ghost writing" could be merely an informal sharing of material, such as between Charley Jordan and Peetie Wheatstraw, or it could be a more organized Tin Pan Alley affair, in which lyricists were hired to write songs for

¹⁹ Jim O'Neal and Amy O'Neal, "Living Blues Interview: Georgia Tom Dorsey," Living Blues, No. 20 (Mar-April 1975), p. 26.

²⁰ Kip Lornell, record notes to Biograph BLP-C9.

²¹ Anon., record notes to Columbia C-30496.

²² Arthur Rosenbaum, record notes to Bluesville 1047.

²³ Pete Lowry, "Some Cold Rainy Day," Blues Unlimited, No. 103 (Aug.-Sept. 1973), p. 15.

performers. Certainly, in the case of the female vaudeville blues singers, a large proportion of their songs were of the Tin Pan Alley variety. Thomas Dorsey, as well as writing songs for his own performances, was one of the finest Tin Pan Alley blues composers:

[Dorsey] studied music at the Chicago College of Composition and Arranging, learning the skills he parlayed into a loose connection with Paramount Records' music publishing arm. In this capacity he wrote lead sheets (at \$3 apiece) of recorded material for copyright purposes and sometimes submitted works to Paramount's star attractions, who were nearly all vaudeville singers like Ma Rainey and Trixie Smith. Between 1923 (when he began arranging and writing for Paramount) and 1932 Dorsey was to author some two hundred blues songs. . . .²⁴

Tin Pan Alley composition represented perhaps the least spontaneous type of performance before the recording microphone. They were carefully arranged and written by one artist and rehearsed and memorized or read in the studio by another artist. Yet even with these songs, there could be a certain amount of improvisation. Bessie Smith would often sing Tin Pan Alley blues, but slightly alter the lyrics during recording in order to suit her specific style of performance.²⁵ The written lyric, therefore, was not entirely inflexible and did allow a certain amount of spontaneity.

It is also interesting to note that written blues did not necessarily mean that those lyrics achieve any sort of permanence in the repertoire of the artist. We have already seen that Mary Johnson disposed of her manuscripts very shortly after recording and soon forgot the words she had written. This same attitude towards written blues has been expressed by a number of singers, such as Victoria Spivey:

In those days it was the matter of the dollar, all of us could write

²⁴ Stephen Calt, record notes to Yazoo L-1041.

²⁵ Chris Albertson, Bessie (New York: Stein and Day, 1972), p. 50.

those blues a dime a dozen. [Lester] Melrose would talk to me to-night and tomorrow I would have him six tunes and the very next day knowing that we wouldn't get any royalties we forgot about them and would write six more. Those were the days.²⁶

The "disposable" written-text opens up a whole new area of research into the differences between written and oral traditions. Where writing is simply a tool for the transmission and memorization, but not for the preservation of a song, the lyrics of that song remain almost as changeable and fleeting as an orally composed piece. The fact that many blues were written, therefore, does not necessarily ensure their stability in tradition. The real stabilizing factor was the phonodisc itself, which gave permanence to the song whether it had been improvised in the studio or carefully worked out with pen and ink beforehand.

There were, of course, other means of getting material besides improvisation and communally or individually written texts. In Chapter VII we discussed covering, in which one singer consciously performed a song which another singer made successful on record. This was a very common practice among vaudeville artists and was not looked upon as unethical. Royalties were almost non-existent and copyright laws were difficult to enforce. Record companies were quick to take a money-making song from one company and give it to one of their artists to cover. Although this practice is most often associated with the vaudeville singers, artists of all sorts indulged in it. For example, Robert Johnson's "32-20 Blues" (JOHR-11) is a conscious cover of Skip James' "22-20 Blues" (JAMS-7).

A less ethical means of obtaining material was a direct outgrowth of the written composition of blues texts; one singer might simply try to

²⁶ John Godrich, "Postscript (See BU 19): Victoria Spivey," Blues Unlimited, No. 20 (Mar. 1965), p. 10.

steal a written song from another performer. There is no way of knowing how common this practice was, but it was reported that "one of the famous blues singers of the 30s had a penchant for stealing songs and used to haunt the studio when they [Carr and Blackwell] were recording to look at their lead sheets; he became known as the 'studio ghost'."²⁷

Given the widespread use of written song texts among recording blues artists, it is difficult to determine whether a performer's songs were pre-written or improvised in non-recording contexts. As will be shown in subsequent chapters, literate composition did not seem to affect either the style of performance or the nature of the lyrics. For example, one would imagine that Robert Johnson would be a good improviser of the blues, because of his rough, rural style of performance; yet alternate takes of his recorded songs are almost identical, which indicates that he either worked from written texts or memorized every word of his songs before stepping into the recording studio. What is even more surprising is the fact that even in non-recording contexts, Johnson shunned spontaneous versification, as David "Honeyboy" Edwards recalls:

He didn't change his numbers much. Just like he'd play his first number he recorded, he'd play it the same way all the time. Every number that he played, it was just like he played it the same way all the time. He never would do no changing too much. He could play lots of numbers he had never put on record, some songs that he'd make up, or some of the old records that guys call for that somebody else had recorded. Just like we'd do. Request a song. But on his own he would play his own numbers. People liked them.²⁸

Because of the general lack of difference between pre-written and spontaneous race record blues, we may excuse Abbe Niles for believing that

²⁷ Anon., record note to Columbia C-30496.

²⁸ Pete Welding, "David 'Honeyboy' Edwards," Blues Unlimited, No. 54 (June 1968), p. 9.

Bessie Smith was making up "her own words before the unforgiving jaws of the recording Machine."²⁹ Her studio performances no doubt looked very much like improvised sessions, but, as Chris Albertson points out, this appearance was deceptive: "She would make up the words, memorize them, and have someone else, usually her pianist, write the music."³⁰

The exact techniques of blues composition, whether oral or written, will be discussed later, but a word should be said here about the ways that singers were inspired to create their songs. Of course, in the vast majority of cases, we know nothing of the individual techniques used by the blues artists to get into a creative mood, or how they found the material which they used as themes in their compositions. No doubt inspiration came to them in much the same ways that other creative people are inspired. Some, like Babe Stovall, need solitude:

I can make up songs, you know, but I have to get off by myself with nothing else on my mind but to get my words placed right. When a person's studying songs like that, he don't need nothing to worry him, nothing to be thinking about only what he's doing, get his mind on that. You have to think of the words first to play the music. You can't play the music and not know the words.³¹

Others need to observe life around them to get inspired. Solitude does not suit the creative talents of Willie Borum:

It's working that give me my ideas. I walk around the plant at night, when it's quiet, you know, and I can hear men talking. Some of them is crying that their wife has left them or that she isn't doing them right, and somebody else is saying that his girl's took up with somebody else. I hear all that and that's what I put in my blues. I come back here and write down the things; rhymed up, of course.

²⁹ "Introduction," in *Blues: An Anthology*, by W. C. Handy (New York: Albert and Charles Boni, 1926), p. 23.

³⁰ *Bessie*, p. 69.

³¹ David Evans, "Babe Stovall," *Blues Unlimited* (1966), rpt. in *Back Woods Blues*, comp. Simon A. Napier (Bexhill-On-Sea?, U.K.: Blues Unlimited, 1968), p. 53.

I make the verses and things right when I'm still there walking around at the job.³²

Some artists seem to feel almost divinely inspired, such as Booker White: "I just reach up and pull them out of the sky--call them sky songs--they just come to me."³³ Leonard Caston, on the other hand, seems to need no special inspiration nor any particular mood in order to create songs:

Writing a song isn't too much of a job; it's just a thing that is like writing a poem, to me. You don't always have to have the blues to write a blues; it's just like drawing a picture. Artist draws a picture and hopes somebody else likes it. You can write a song in the same way.³⁴

The truly prolific writers, such as Leroy Carr or Thomas Dorsey, saw composing more as a business than as an art, and probably needed no special mood to be inspired. Bill Broonzy, another highly successful songwriter, describes his technique:

Now take a knife. How many things can you do with a knife?
You can cut fish, you can cut your toenails, I've seen guys shave with it, you can kill a man. There. You name five things you can do with a knife, you got five verses. You got yourself a blues.³⁵

Broonzy's dispassionate, mechanical technique certainly emphasizes the fact that one need not have the blues, as Caston says, to write the blues.³⁶

Whatever the songwriter's technique and however he was inspired; the lyrics of the blues rarely betray the method. The highly patterned style

³² Samuel B. Charters, record notes to Bluesville 1048.

³³ Chris Strachwitz, record notes to Arhoolie F-1019.

³⁴ Jeff Titon, ed., *From Blues to Pop: The Autobiography of Leonard "Baby Doo" Caston*, JEMF Special Series, No. 4 (Los Angeles: John Edwards Memorial Foundation, 1974), p. 23.

³⁵ Studs Terkel, record notes to Mercury MG-20822.

³⁶ The same observation was made by Iain Lang, *Jazz in Perspective: The Background of the Blues* (London: Hutchinson, [1948]), p. 109.

of blues composition, which will be discussed in subsequent chapters, remained fairly constant, whether the song was improvised or written, divinely inspired or dashed off by the artist without any emotion.

XI THE FORMULAIC NATURE OF THE BLUES: PAST SCHOLARSHIP

Whether improvised before the microphone or meticulously written out and memorized, blues lyrics conform to one structural pattern. Blues lyrics are formulaic, and the basic unit of blues composition is the whole-line or half-line formula. The definition of the blues formula and the means by which it is manipulated by the singer will be discussed in subsequent chapters. First, however, it is important to understand the place of this structural theory in the history of blues scholarship.

The idea that blues lyrics are made up of formulaic units is not new. Indeed, the blues formula has been recognized, either overtly or tacitly, by most scholars who have commented on the lyrical structure of this song form. Not all writers have used the word "formula" to describe these units, and not all have agreed on the size of the basic formulaic unit in the blues, but all of them seem to recognize that there is a traditional storehouse of lyrical material upon which singers draw in constructing their blues.

As early as 1911, Howard W. Odum used the term "formula" in describing the precursor to the blues--the work song:

The real work-song, and that from which many of the negro songs originally sprang, is the work-song phrase. The formulas by which they "pull together" are often simple expressions of word or phrase originated in communal work.¹

Muriel Longini also used the term and gave examples of formulas, although she saw the formula not so much as the basic structural unit of the blues, but rather as a filler or stopgap in an otherwise innovative song form:

¹ "Folk-Song and Folk-Poetry as Found in the Secular Songs of the Southern Negroes--Concluded," *Journal of American Folklore*, 24 (1911), 389.

"Further changes are wrought thus: if in the singing of a song, a line is forgotten, pat phrases or formulas are inserted, e.g. 'that's all right mama, that's all right for you, just anything you do', or 'I believe to my soul . . .'"² Sterling Brown also employed the term "formula" when he wrote that "the formulas of loving and leaving are numerous" in the blues,³ but whether he was referring to lyrical structure or simply to poetic imagery is difficult to determine.

The majority of blues scholars, however, have not used the term "formula." Carl Van Vechten called these units "favorite phrases" of the blues singers,⁴ whereas Abbe Niles preferred to use the terms "common-property line" and "common-property verses."⁵ In speaking of these units, Gilbert Chase referred to "current tag lines strung together in the moment of improvisation,"⁶ and more recently, Harry Oster has resorted to architectural terms: ". . . the basic element of most blues . . . are standardized bricks which can be used to construct a wide variety of buildings . . ."⁷

Some scholars have a rather low opinion of blues formulas, feeling that their repetitive, non-innovative nature simply indicates bad poetry. Russell Ames, Paul Oliver, and Stephen Calt reveal their feelings towards

² "Folk Songs of Chicago Negroes," Journal of American Folklore, 52 (1939), 97n.

³ "The Blues," Phylon, 13 (1953), 289.

⁴ "The Black Blues: Negro Songs of Disappointment in Love--Their Pathos Hardened with Laughter," Vanity Fair, 24 (Aug. 1925), 57.

⁵ "Blue Notes," New Republic, 45 (3 Feb. 1926), 292; and "Introduction," in Blues: An Anthology, by W. C. Handy (New York: Charles and Albert Boni, 1926), p. 10.

⁶ America's Music: From Pilgrims to the Present (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1955), p. 453.

⁷ "The Blues as a Genre," Genre, 2 (1969), 267.

the formulaic structure of blues lyrics by using the rather pejorative term "cliche" to describe the basic unit.⁸ Still other writers acknowledge the presence of formulas only tacitly in their comparative notes. Howard W. Odum and Guy B. Johnson, in Negro Workaday Songs (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1926), noted analogous lines and phrases between one song and another. Newman I. White showed how the phrase, "a good looking woman," was used in conjunction with various end-of-line formulas in different blues, although he never actually referred to this phrase as a structural unit of the lyrics.⁹ In his notes to Charley Patton's recorded repertoire, John Fahey found many analogues with phrases in other recorded songs, but as with Odum and Johnson and White, he does not overtly label these structural units.¹⁰

Just as there has been little agreement on what to call these basic structural units of the blues, there are a number of opinions as to how large a section of the blues lyric constitutes the basic element of composition. Words, phrases, lines, and stanzas have all been called formulaic by different writers, and indeed there is much fuzziness and imprecision in the descriptions of formulaic units. The following passage illustrates this:

Blues was an improvised music in which singers created either their

⁸ "Communications: Implications of Negro Folk Song," Science and Society, 15 (1951), 167; Aspects of the Blues Tradition (1968; rpt. New York: Oak Publications, 1970), p. 42; and "The Country Blues as Meaning," in Country Blues Songbook, by Stefan Grossman, Stephen Calt, and Hal Grossman (New York: Oak Publications, 1973), p. 25, respectively.

⁹ American Negro Folk-Songs (1928; rpt. Hatboro, Pa.: Folklore Associates, 1965), pp. 313-15.

¹⁰ Charley Patton (London: Studio Vista, 1970), pp. 72-107.

own songs or new versions of old songs by impromptu imagination, free association, and the use of what folklorists call "floating" verses (lines that crop up time and again in a wide variety of songs), for example: "I'm a poor boy, long ways from home," "Laughing just to keep from crying," and "I got a woman, she's six feet tall/ Sleeps in the kitchen with her head in the hall."¹¹

Note that Roberts first chooses a line, then a half-line, and finally an entire stanza as examples of formulas. It is not at all clear what he means by "verse" in this context, since in the same sentence he defines them as "lines" but gives examples of "verses" which are both less than, and more than, a blues line.

This imprecision is common. In one article, Russell Ames writes that the blues is composed of "traditional phrases"¹² while in another he includes words as well as phrases in his definition of blues formulas, and gives the following potpourri as examples of basic units in the blues: "'Don't you leave me here,' 'mistreat,' 'lonesome,' 'worry my mind,' 'how long?' 'weary,' 'call my name,' 'baby,' 'man of mine,' 'can't keep from cryin',' 'too damn mean to cry,' 'hung his head and cried'."¹³ Similar vague descriptions of formulas as "lines and phrases," "lines and verses," or "lines and stanzas" have been given by such scholars as Mimi Clar, David Evans, Jonathan Kamin, Charles Keil, Francis Newton, and Paul Oliver.¹⁴

¹¹ John S. Roberts, Black Music of Two Worlds (New York: Praeger, 1972), p. 181.

¹² "Protest and Irony in Negro Folk Song," Science and Society, 14 (1950), 202.

¹³ "Art in Negro Folk Song," Journal of American Folklore, 56 (1943), 250.

¹⁴ "Folk Belief and Custom in the Blues," Western Folklore, 19 (1960), 173; "Techniques of Blues Composition among Black Folksingers," Journal of American Folklore, 87 (1974), 245; "The Blues: The Structure of a Tradition," M.A. Thesis, Wesleyan Univ. 1965, p. 55; Urban Blues (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1966), pp. 52, 171; The Jazz Scene (London: Macgibbon & Kee, 1959), p. 157; and Conversation with the Blues (New York: Horizon Press, 1965), pp. 5-6, respectively.

Other scholars seem to have settled on the stanza, alone, as the basic unit of blues composition, although again, since most of them use the more imprecise term "verse," one is never sure exactly what they have in mind. Guy B. Johnson described the stanzaic formula rather colourfully: "Like certain modern household appliances, which are 'guaranteed to fit any standard fixture,' these stanzas are available for adoption into any song which they happen to fit."¹⁵ Another writer has resorted to biology in speaking of a "'genetic pool' of verses,"¹⁶ while Samuel B. Charters, Charles Roxin, and Newman I. White have also described the stanza as the basic unit, though in less flamboyant terms.¹⁷

William Ferris, Jr. has been the most articulate proponent of the blues stanza as the basic formalic unit. In his book, Blues from the Delta (London: Studio Vista, 1970), he describes the traditional blues stanza as the basic structural element of blues composition, although at the same time he also perceives part-stanzas or half-lines as also being traditional units in themselves; however, he calls these part-stanzas "commonplaces" and does not discuss them as integral parts of blues structure. Exactly what the difference is between Ferris' formulas and commonplaces, in terms of their roles as units of construction in the blues, is never made clear. The very fact that Ferris recognizes traditional units smaller than the stanza (that is, the commonplace)

¹⁵ "Negro Folk Songs," in Culture in the South, ed. W. T. Couch (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1935), pp. 552-53.

¹⁶ Don Kent and Michael Stewart, record notes to Mamlish 3800.

¹⁷ The Poetry of the Blues (New York: Oak Publications, 1963), pp. 6, 23; Aspects of the Blues (Fairport, N.Y.: Sapce Age Printers, 1973), p. 10; and "The White Man in the Woodpile: Some Influences on Negro Secular Folk-Songs," American Speech, 4 (1928-29), 207, respectively.

would seem to negate his theory that the stanza is the basic structural unit.

In reviewing Blues from the Delta, Barry L. Pearson noted this inconsistency in Ferris' structural analysis:

Ferris points out that within the blues tradition a performer may rely upon a stock of memorized verses or couplets that he can combine to produce a blues. . . . One could take this idea of the verse as the important traditional unit one step further and examine each line of the verse.¹⁸

Indeed, as will be shown, the blues line itself is usually composed of two smaller units which are the true basic formulas of blues structure.

Ferris, of course, is only one of many who has failed to look beyond the blues stanza in his search for formulas. For example, Harry Oster, in the notes to one of the songs in his collection, wrote, "The second to last stanza affords a significant example of how a blues singer often takes a standard verse and alters it slightly to fit his own personal situation."¹⁹ The "slight" alteration is, in fact, the substitution of one half-line formula for another.

The vague and imprecise theories of past structural studies of the blues all stem from a lack of scientific and detailed analysis of blues lyrics. Most scholars have merely paid lip-service to the "traditional storehouse of lines, phrases, and verses" in the blues and then have gone on to discuss aspects of the blues which were of greater interest to them. Everyone knows that formulas exist in the blues, but no one has bothered to rigorously analyze how these basic structural units are put together to make a blues. Even Ferris, who spends an entire chapter discussing for-

¹⁸ Journal of American Folklore, 85 (1972), 194.

¹⁹ Living Country Blues (Detroit: Folklore Associates, 1969), p. 323.

mulaic stanzas in the blues, does not engage in the kind of detailed textual analysis which is essential to structural studies. Compared to what has been attempted and accomplished in the study of epic poetry, blues scholars have done nothing more than state an hypothesis.

This is not to say that blues scholars have not been urged to pursue their gut-reaction feeling that the blues is formulaic. In a review of Albert Lord's The Singer of Tales, D. K. Wilgus wrote, "The investigator may well find closer analogies [to Lord's formulaic system] in blues and even blues ballads,"²⁰ but no one answered his challenge. Similarly, Bruce Jackson called for a rigorous formulaic analysis:

The structural units in Negro folksong are the metaphor and line, not the plot or part of plot. Instead of weaving narrative elements to create a story, the Negro song accumulates images to create a feeling . . . Negro songs are formulaic, however, and a study of the incidence and configurations of formulae would be profitable, if arduous.²¹

and Paul Oliver has also called for more study in this area: "The force of tradition in the blues is strong with standard verses becoming part of a common resource for singers of widely different character, itself an aspect which deserves greater study."²²

Only in the last five years have scholars taken up this call, and quite significantly, as of this writing, no detailed analysis of formulas in the blues has been published. Chapter V of Jeff Titon's forthcoming book, Early Down Home Blues: A Musical and Cultural Analysis (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press), entitled "Formulaic Structure and Meaning of Early Down Home Blues Lyrics," correctly points out that blues formulas are

²⁰ Kentucky Folklore Record, 7 (1961), 44.

²¹ "Foreword," in American Negro Folk-Songs, by White, p. xi.

²² Aspects of Blues Tradition, p. 189.

generally half-line in length and that underlying semantic and syntactic deep structures generate surface-level formulas. John Barrie's unpublished paper, "Oral Formulas in the Country Blues," (written in 1975, submitted to Southern Folklore Quarterly) follows Titon's lead, and analyzes the variants of a formula which Barrie labels I am going away, as it appears in thirty-eight blues songs.

But even these studies are cursory and preliminary, and indeed the question of formulas in the blues is not of paramount importance in either Titon's or Barrie's work; Titon is more interested in the structure of the music, and Barrie's main area of investigation is the metrics of blues poetry. My own short study of the nature of one specific formula, "'I Woke Up This Morning': A Transformational-Generative Approach to the Formulaic Structure of Blues Lyrics," (paper read at the American Folklore Society Annual Meeting, Austin, 16 Nov. 1972), is more directly concerned with the formulaic analysis of blues lyrics, although much of the linguistic theory used in the paper is too simplistic. Titon's reasons for his rather short treatment of the formula in the blues stem from a certain sense of academic territoriality: "Development and presentation of his model is best left to Taft himself; it would be a disservice for me to summarize it as it presently stands" and Barrie, likewise, owes many of his thoughts on blues formulas to my 1972 paper, as well as subsequent correspondence with me (see footnote 2 of his paper).

A rigorous analysis of the true nature of blues formulas cannot be accomplished in a short paper but requires many texts and much explication. In subsequent chapters, the intuitions of many scholars about blues structure will take a concrete form, and, hopefully, the expectations of those few writers who saw the need for further formulaic analysis will be satisfied.

XII THE BLUES FORMULA: A DEFINITION

In this chapter I will outline the nature of the basic structural unit of blues composition, the formula: its possible positions within the blues line and stanza, its semantic structure; and its varied manifestations within different lyrical contexts. The paradox of the formula as both a theoretical construction and as a reality of blues composition will also be explained. In addition, the seeming conflict between formulaic competence and formulaic performance will be explored and resolved.

It is evident that for the purposes of this study the concept of the formula in the blues must be clearly and rigorously defined. Although formulaic scholarship has existed for well over one hundred years,¹ there is no one definition of the term "formula" which is agreed upon by all scholars.² This is, in part, due to the different types of poetry which have been studied as formulaic systems: classical Greek epics, Old English and Middle English poetry, and modern Yugoslavian epics, among others. Obviously, different kinds of poetry will require different types of formulaic structures. But this lack of consensus is also due to the intuitive, non-scientific approach which most past scholars have taken to formulaic structure. It might be said that formulaic scholarship is still

¹ J. B. Hainsworth, The Flexibility of the Homeric Formula (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1968), pp. 4-5, cites J. E. Ellendt, Drei homerische Abhandlungen, 1864, and H. Duntzer, Homerische Abhandlungen, 1872, as two pioneering works in the study of the formula. See also references to early formulaic studies in John S. P. Tatlock, "Epic Formulas, Especially in Lagamon," PMLA, 38 (1923), 515.

² The diversity of opinion is evident in a recent symposium on the formula: Benjamin A. Stolz and Richard S. Shannon, III, eds., Oral Literature and the Formula (Ann Arbor: Center for the Coordination of Ancient and Modern Studies, Univ. of Michigan, 1976).

in a pre-paradigmatic stage of development,³ and that several different definitions of the concept, "formula," currently exist side-by-side. . .

It is not my intention in this chapter to construct a paradigm which will describe all formulaic systems. Such a task, if possible at all, would go beyond the scope of this study. Nor is my aim to establish the only possible definition of the blues formula. Different approaches to blues scholarship require different definitions of blues structure. Thematic or textual criteria might be of primary importance for some types of analyses, while folk-categories might be more significant for other studies. Since the aim of this study is to show how the singer constructed his songs, I will establish an operational definition which will be of the most use in this type of analysis. Even within the boundaries of this study, however, an inflexible paradigm is impossible, since as will be shown, the formula is a theoretical construction which may be shaped, to some extent, to fit particular structural analyses.

All the various definitions of the formula are based upon the concept of recurring patterns of speech within a poetic form. The length of these patterns, their linguistic properties, and their functions within the poetic text, however, are subject to various interpretations. Tatlock was among the earliest of modern scholars to attempt a definition of the formula, which he defined as a nearly exact repetition of a phrase "three or more times in a poem."⁴ He realized, however, that there was a great need for more definition of the formula, and five years later the classicist,

³ For a discussion of the role of paradigms in scientific research, see Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd ed., International Encyclopedia of Unified Science, Vol. 1 & 2 (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1970).

⁴ "Epic Formulas," p. 494.

Milman Parry, wrote the following definition:

In the diction of bardic poetry, the formula can be defined as an expression regularly used, under the same metrical conditions, to express an essential idea. What is essential in an idea is what remains after all stylistic superfluity has been taken from it.⁵

Two years later, Parry explained more clearly what he meant by "stylistic superfluity":

The essential part of the idea is that which remains after one has counted out everything in the expression which is purely for the sake of style. Thus, the essential idea in the word-group ἥμος δ' ἡριγένεια φάνη ροδοδάκτυλος 'Hōs is 'when it was morning', that in εἶπε 'μεν is 'he went', that in τὸν δ' αὖτε πρόειπε is 'he said to him'.⁶

Parry's definition has gained wide acceptance and is often quoted as the basis of other formulaic definitions. Lord's study of Yugoslavian epics, Magoun's approach to Old English poetry, Rosenberg's investigation of the American folk sermon, and Webber's study of Spanish ballads are some of the more detailed formulaic analyses which are indebted to Parry's fundamental concept of the formula.⁷ Parry's definition, however, is itself open to considerable interpretation, as H. L. Rogers points out:

⁵ "The Traditional Epithet in Homer," in The Making of Homeric Verse: The Collected Papers of Milman Parry, ed. & trans. Adam Parry (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1971), p. 11; originally published as L'épithète traditionnelle dans Homère: Essai sur un problème de style homérique (Paris: Société Editrice Les Belles Lettres, 1928).

⁶ Milman Parry, "Studies in the Epic Technique of Oral Verse-Making. I: Homer and Homeric Style," Harvard Studies in Classical Philology, 41 (1930), rpt. in The Making of Homeric Verse, p. 272.

⁷ Albert B. Lord, The Singer of Tales, Harvard Studies in Comparative Literature, No. 24 (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1960); Francis P. Magoun, Jr., "Oral-Formulaic Character of Anglo-Saxon Narrative Poetry," Speculum, 28 (1953), 446-67; Bruce A. Rosenberg, The Art of the American Folk Preacher (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1970); and Ruth H. Webber, "Formulistic Diction in the Spanish Ballad," University of California Publications in Modern Philology, Vol. 34, ed. L. M. Price, J. E. de La Harpe, and R. K. Spaulding (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1951), pp. 175-277, respectively.

Parry's "regularly employed", itself unsatisfactory, has been interpreted to mean "approximately repeated". Parry's "under the same metrical conditions" has been interpreted to mean "under no metrical conditions." Parry's definition of the formula as a "group of words", one finds, has also been relaxed: on the one hand, it is held to include single words; on the other, it is extended to cover not only lexical features (collocations), but grammatical features as well.⁸

In an attempt to make the definition of the formula more rigorous, many scholars have made use of linguistic theories and terminologies. In this way, they hoped to eliminate many of the terminological vagueries of Parry's definition. The use of linguistic terminology alone, however, does not ensure a clear and unambiguous definition. Note the following passage:

The formula is a habitual collocation, metrically defined, and is thus a stylization of something which is fundamental to linguistic expression, namely the expectation that a sequence of words will show lexical congruity, together with (and as a condition of) lexical and grammatical complementarity.⁹

Quirk's concept of "lexical congruity" or, for that matter, of what is "fundamental to linguistic expression" is as vague and variable as Parry's non-linguistic criteria. Other scholars, however, have been much more precise in determining when two phrases may be seen as members of the same formula. These scholars may be grouped into two linguistic schools: those who define the formula primarily by syntax and those who define the formula primarily by semantics. Syntax and semantics are two of the three major components of linguistic analysis (the third being phonology); the former is concerned with sentence structure, parts of

⁸ "The Crypto-Psychological Character of the Oral Formula," English Studies, 47 (1966), 98.

⁹ Randolph Quirk, "Poetic Language and Old English Metre," in Early English and Norse Studies Presented to Hugh Smith in Honour of His Sixtieth Birthday, ed. Arthur Brown and Peter Foote (London: Methuen, 1963), pp. 150-51.

speech, and the ordering of words, while the latter is concerned with meaning.

The "syntax school" of formula scholars sees sentence structure as the main criterion for regarding two phrases as members of the same formula or formula-group. One of the earliest syntactic proponents was Ronald A. Waldron, who, in describing the structure of Middle English alliterative verse, conceived of generalized formulas with innumerable lexical substitutions; for example, "as soon as the (NOUN)(VERB)" or "the first (NOUN) that he (VERB)."¹⁰ Robert P. Creed similarly defined the Old English formula as a "syntactic entity" made up of "an article and its noun, or a noun or pronoun and its verb, or a verb and its object."¹¹ Donald K. Fry described Old English formulaic systems using the same model as Waldron and stated quite categorically that "formulas of a system are related semantically only in the loosest sense."¹² Linguist, Paul Kiparsky, also takes the syntactic position in his study of Homeric epics; his exploration of the similarities between idiomatic speech and epic formulas is perhaps the most fruitful of all the syntactic investigations, but his study suffers from a lack of semantic considerations.¹³

This disregard for the role of semantics in the definition of the

¹⁰ "Oral Formulaic Technique and Middle English Alliterative Poetry," Speculum, 32 (1957), 798-99.

¹¹ "The Making of an Anglo-Saxon Poem," ELH, 26 (1959), 446.

¹² "Old English Formulas and Systems," English Studies, 48 (1967), 203. For the most comprehensive syntactic study of Old English verse; see Godfrey L. Gattiker, "The Syntactic Basis of the Poetic Formula in Beowulf," Diss. Univ. of Wisconsin 1962.

¹³ "Oral Poetry: Some Linguistic and Typological Considerations," in Oral Literature and the Formula, ed. Stolz and Shannon, pp. 73-125.

formula has been criticized: J. B. Hainsworth wrote, "I conclude that very severe difficulties must be surmounted before it will be possible to make sentence-structure the sole criterion of formulaic status,"¹⁴ while others have been less charitable in their objections to the syntax school.¹⁵

The problem with the syntactic definition of formulas is not that such patterns do not exist in poetry, but that syntactic patterns are not peculiar to a poetic form; rather they are patterns inherent in the language itself. John Finlayson makes this very point:

To speak about a syntactic-grammatical structure as the "mould" into which meaning can be poured is to say no more than that the English language has a discernable syntactic structure. The phrase, "I shall . . . the (you) . . .", is a formula only in the sense that any phrase or sentence is a formula. All language is in this sense a formula.¹⁶

Language is by definition patterned sound, so that, regardless of the types of poetry under investigation, patterns will emerge. Waldron's formula, "as soon as (NOUN)(VERB)," is a syntactic pattern, not specific to poetry, but to the English language as a whole.

Those who define the formula solely in terms of syntax have failed to realize that the pattern which is specific to a poetic form is a sub-set of the rules of language, a language within a language, and it is this sub-set of linguistic rules wherein the definition of the formula

¹⁴ "Structure and Content in Epic Formula: The Question of the Unique Expression," *Classical Quarterly*, NS 14 (1964), 160.

¹⁵ See, for example, Donald C. Green, "Formulas and Syntax on Old English Poetry: A Computer Study," *Computers and the Humanities*, 6 (1971), 92n; W. W. Minton, "The Fallacy of the Structural Formula," *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, 96 (1965), 241-53; and Rogers, p. 102.

¹⁶ "Formulaic Technique in *Morte Arthure*," *Anglia*, 81 (1963), 375. See also Rogers, p. 100, for a similar statement.

lies. Lord, in discussing Yugoslavian epic poetry, made this point when he wrote, "In studying the patterns and systems of oral narrative verse we are in reality observing the 'grammar' of the poetry, a grammar superimposed, as it were, on the grammar of the language concerned."¹⁷ and other scholars have similarly realized this basic fact as it applies to Old English poetry, modern English balladry, and American folk sermons.¹⁸

Bearing this in mind, the approach to formulaic analysis should not be purely linguistic, but, more properly, stylistic, since stylistics is the study of special sub-sets of language:

The term stylistics is used for that area of linguistics which presents a theory and methodology for a formal analysis of a literary text. In such a theory (or theories) the focus is on the language features of a literary text. The linguistic exponents are then 'structured' at various levels to contextualize the text; the contextualization and the categorization depending on the focus of the investigator. It is generally claimed that in linguistic terms, literary style implies selection and ordering of various patterns. These may be phonological, syntactic, or lexical.¹⁹

This language within a language may very well have special syntactic rules; that is, a poetic form may have sentence structures which would be considered odd or incorrect in everyday speech. But this is not always the case. Blues lyrics exhibit few, if any, extraordinary sentence constructions, and the same is true of American folk sermons. Poetic language, however, is almost always made up of images and ideas which are

¹⁷ Singer of Tales, pp. 35-36.

¹⁸ Patrick W. Connor, "Schematization of Oral-Formulaic Processes in Old English Poetry," Language and Style, 5 (1972), 204-20; David Buchan, The Ballad and the Folk (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), p. 146; and Bruce A. Rosenberg, "The Formulaic Quality of Spontaneous Sermons," Journal of American Folklore, 83 (1970), 15, respectively.

¹⁹ Braj B. Kachru and Herbert F. W. Stahlke, eds., Current Trends in Stylistics, Papers in Linguistics Monograph Series, No. 2 (Edmonton: Linguistic Research Inc., 1972), pp. vii-viii.

not usually associated with everyday language. Epics abound with descriptions of heroic deeds and fantastic events; folk sermons deal with religious symbols and images; blues lyrics are mostly concerned with love. It is the poet's need to continually articulate these select images and ideas within a restricted poetic form which gives rise to formulas: recurrent patterns of language which evoke certain word-pictures, sentiments, or philosophies.

The part of language which carries the bulk of imagery is its lexical morphology (words and morphemes of meaning) and, therefore, it is the semantic structure of poetic language which is the proper "focus of investigation" for a formulaic analysis. The "semantic school" of formulaic study is considerably smaller than the "syntax school," but significantly the arguments of its proponents are concurrent with those of the syntax scholars. In reference to the Homeric epic, Cedric H. Whitman defined the formula quite simply as "a semantic unit identified with a metrical demand."²⁰ Following Whitman's lead, Wayne A. O'Neil applied semantic criteria to his definition of the formula in Old English poetry.²¹ More recently, Michael N. Nagler had proposed that each individual formulaic phrase in Homeric poetry be considered an "allomorph, not of any other existing phrase, but of some central Gestalt,"²² which clearly calls for semantic rather than syntactic analysis.

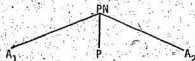
²⁰ Homer and the Homeric Tradition (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1958), p. 109.

²¹ "Oral-Formulaic Structure in Old English Elegiac Poetry," Diss. Univ. of Wisconsin 1960; and "Another Look at Oral Poetry in The Seafarer," Speculum, 35 (1960), 596-600.

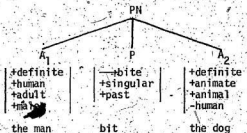
²² "Towards a Generative View of the Oral Formula," Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association, 98 (1967), 281; emphasis is Nagler's.

Those critics of the syntax school mentioned above give their tacit support to the theories of Whitman, O'Neil, and Nagler, even if they have not formulated their definitions in a similarly rigorous manner.

The blues formula is a semantic unit. More specifically, each blues formula is composed of at least one complete semantic predication. A predication has been described in the following manner: "If a sentence (according to traditional definition) 'expresses a complete thought', then a predication can be informally characterized as a 'complete thought' that a sentence expresses."²³ The predication is composed of at least one predicate and up to two arguments. It may be visualized in a hierarchical tree-diagram in which the predication (PN) is shown to include within its structure one or two arguments (A_1 and A_2) and a predicate (P):²⁴



In turn, each predicate and argument is composed of a number of semantic features which ultimately generate a word from the speaker's lexicon. In the following diagram, only a few of the possible semantic features are represented:



²³ Geoffrey Leech, *Semantics* (Harmondsworth, U.K.: Penguin Books, 1974), p. 90.

²⁴ For a more detailed discussion of the nature of predications, see Leech, pp. 126-55.

Although a predication may look like a "simple sentence," it should not be thought of as one. A predication may indeed be expressed, syntactically, as a simple sentence, where the arguments are nouns and the predicate is a verb, but it may also take the form of an adverbial, adjectival, prepositional, or noun phrase. To understand this, one must realize that a predicate names any relationship between two arguments, whether that relationship involves a subject and object linked by a verb,

the man bit the dog

I walked to town

a prepositional relationship,

the house on the hill

a tale of two cities

a man about town

a co-ordinating conjunction relationship,

to and fro

John and Mary

tired but happy

good or bad

a subordinating conjunction relationship,

fire when ready

I would run if I were able

or any other relationship between two arguments. Note in the above examples that the arguments linked in a relationship by the predicate need not be nouns, but can be any part of speech from verbs to adverbs to entire clauses. Different manifestations of this semantic structure will be described later, but for now it is important to realize that the fundamental formulaic unit of the blues is the predication.

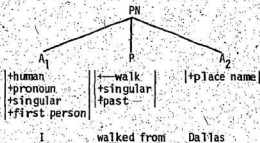
If the blues formula is a predication, how is it expressed within

the confines of the poetic structure? Parry and Whitman, among others, defined the formula in terms of its metrical function within the poem (see footnotes 5 and 20); but as will be shown later, the blues formula is quite free from metrical constraints. The blues formula may be defined, therefore, not by its "metrical demand" but by its placement within the blues line.

In order to make this clear, let us briefly review the structure of the blues couplet. It is made up of two lines which rhyme with each other; each line is divided into two half-lines by a caesura; and each line comprises at least one complete thought without any enjambment from one line to the next. The following couplet is typical:

1 I walked from Dallas; I walked to Wichita Falls
After I lost my sugar, I wasn't going to walk at all
(JEFB-1)

The formula, since it is a predication (a complete thought), always remains within the confines of one blues line. In a majority of cases, there are two formulas for each line, corresponding roughly to the two half-lines of the stanzaic structure. This is the case with couplet 1. The first half-line contains a complete formula, which may be represented by the following diagram:



A similar representation could be made for the other three formulas in the above couplet: I walked to Wichita Falls, I lost my sugar, and I

wasn't going to walk at all. (The nature of the word after and the subordination of the first clause in the second line will be discussed in Chapter XIV.)

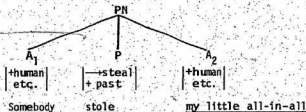
This arrangement of formulas in the line automatically separates the types of blues formulas into two positional categories: those which contain a rhyme-word, and those which do not contain a rhyme-word. These types of formula may be labelled "r-formulas" for those which carry the rhyme, and "x-formulas" for those which do not carry the rhyme. Couplet 1 may thus be represented in the following manner, according to the types of formulas in the stanza:

x _____ r _____
x _____ r _____

Because rhyme is essential to the blues stanza, it follows that every blues line must contain one r-formula. The x-formula, however, though present in the great majority of blues lines, is optional. Note the following blues couplet:

- 2 Take one more drink; make me tell it all
Somebody stole my little all-in-all (BRACH-4)

Although the second line of this example exhibits the usual half-line break (after the word Somebody), there is present only one predication and thus only one formula, an r-formula:



The formula positions in example 2 may be represented thus:

x _____ r _____
r _____

Blues couplets composed of only two formulas also occur, although they are not as plentiful as the kinds of couplets described above. Note the following example:

- 3 And when I'm feeling lonesome and blue
My baby know just what to do. (JACK-20)

Couplet 3 contains the minimum two r-formulas necessary for a well-formed blues couplet.

The above three examples describe most blues couplets. Two other categories of formula placement also exist, although their occurrence is rare. One category is the blues couplet in which one of the lines is nothing more than a moan or hum, devoid of linguistic structure, while the other line is composed of formulas:

- 4 ~~Minimum structure~~
Lord I walked all last night, and all last night before
(ALET-6)

The line carrying linguistic information may be composed of either an x- and r-formula, as in example 4, or simply an r-formula.²⁵

Another category consists of blues lines which contain more than one x-formula before the r-formula. Because of the complexity involved in fitting three or more formulas, and therefore three or more complete thoughts, within the short space of a blues line, this "crowding" is quite rare. The following is one example:

- 5 When I start drinking, I'm mean and hateful; and I won't treat
nobody right
I just keeps on walking; looking for places, where they fuss and
fight (SMIJ-9)

Example 5 can be divided into at least six predications: I start drinking, I'm mean and hateful, I won't treat nobody right, I just keeps on walking,

²⁵ Technically, since there is no rhyme as such in example 4, this couplet includes an "r-position" formula, rather than an r-formula.

is looking for places, and where they fuss and fight. In terms of formula placement, the couplet looks like this:

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x-----x-----f-----
x-----x-----f-----

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In some ways, this functions like the hypometric (or metrically crowded) lines of Old English poetry, which Nicholson similarly describes as being overcrowded with formulas.²⁶ The lax metric rules of blues verse, however, allow such crowding to occur without any damage to the poetic scansion.

Up to this point the blues has been described in terms of its semantic structure and its placement within the lyric. It is now necessary to describe how a given predication may be included within the boundaries of a particular blues formula. In other words, how does one know whether two phrases are members of the same or different formulas? One criterion is the placement of the individual predications within the couplet. It is not enough that the same or similar groups of words be "regularly employed" or "appear three or more times" to qualify as being members of the same formula. They must also fulfill the same function within the overall poetic structure of the song. Note the following two couplets:

- 6 I walked away, and I wrang my hands and cried
 Didn't have no blues; I couldn't be satisfied (THOE-1)
- 7 Mmm I fold my arms, and I walked away
 That's all right mama; your troubles will come some day (HOUS-2)

In both couplets the predication I walked away occurs, but these two phrases cannot be classified as members of the same formula. Although their semantic, syntactic, and lexical structures are identical, they

²⁶ Lewis E. Nicholson, "Oral Techniques in the Composition of Expanded Anglo-Saxon Verses," *PMLA*, 78 (1963), 287-92.

fulfill different functions within their respective couplets: in example 6, the phrase is an x-formula; in example 7, the phrase is an r-formula.

The phrase in couplet 7 carries the rhyme of the stanza, whereas the same phrase in couplet 6 is free of this function. Just as metrical and alliterative constraints determine the definition of formulas in Old English poetry and Homeric epics, the factor of rhyme is of prime importance in placing phrases within the same formula in the blues.⁸ An x-formula may undergo certain syntactic transformations (to be discussed later), which would be impossible for an r-formula, since the r-formula must always retain its rhyme-word in the final position. Thus, for two phrases to be a part of the same formula, they must be mutually replaceable, and an x-formula cannot replace an r-formula.

For much the same reasons, two phrases in the r-formula position might not be part of the same formula, even if they are semantically synonymous. Note the following two examples:

- 8 The woman I love, she must be out of town
 She left me this morning with a face that's full of frowns (JEFB-20)
- 9 She carried a razor in her pocket with them frowns all in her face
 Lord I believe some other good joker trying to root me out of my
 place (DAVIN-16)

The underlined phrases in these two couplets are virtually synonymous with the only major difference being syntactic re-ordering. This re-ordering, however, places different rhyme-words at the ends of these two phrases: frowns in example 8, and face in example 9. This, in turn, means that these two phrases require different rhyme sounds in their respective accompanying lines in the couplet: town in example 8, and place in example 9. Because of this rhyme difference, these two phrases are not mutually replaceable, and therefore they are not members of the same formula.

(One could, of course, view the r-formula in a slightly different

way. If the underlined phrases in examples 8 and 9 were both called the same predication, PN_r , and members of the same r-formula, PN_r , then one could say that example 8 shows one possible "rhyme manifestation" of this formula, PN_{r1} , whereas example 9 shows another "rhyme manifestation" of this same formula, PN_{r2} . Thus, any given r-formula would have a number of different manifestations based on its different possible rhyme endings, PN_{r1} , PN_{r2} , PN_{r3} , and so on. This alternative view of the r-formula does not, however, place enough importance upon rhyme in the blues, and therefore does not seem as useful a concept in the structural analysis of blues lyrics. A difference in rhyme is not simply a difference in manifestation, but a fundamental difference in blues poetic structure.)

Note that in the last two examples, aside from everything else, the underlined phrases occur in two different r-positions: the second line in couplet 8, and the first line in couplet 9. This by itself, however, would not disqualify two phrases from belonging to the same formula. The differences between the two lines of a couplet will be discussed in Chapter XIV, but suffice it to say that any given x-formula will function equally well in either x-position, and that any given r-formula will function equally well in either r-position. The underlined phrases in the following two couplets are both members of the same formula:

- 10 Well poor Joe leaving this morning; my face is full of frowns
 I got a mean stepfather, and my dear mother she don't allow me
 around (WILLJ-9)
- 11 Oh well where were you now baby, Clarksdale m-m burned down
 I was way down Sunflower with my face all full of frowns
 (PATT-20)

A more difficult problem in identifying the boundaries of a formula occurs when examining the internal structure of phrases. No modern scholar conceives of formulas as exact repetitions of words; rather it is commonly assumed that individual members of a formula may vary slightly in

word-order, tense, modification, and lexis. The problem lies in determining how much variation can occur between one phrase and another before they can no longer be called members of the same formula.

With every change in the semantic, syntactic, or lexical structure of a phrase, no matter how slight, there is a change in meaning. The formula, therefore, must not be perceived as having one exact meaning, but as having a more general meaning which can be modified, embellished, or otherwise altered. What must remain constant is the "essence" of the formula, however that is to be defined. As one scholar put it, "any word added to a formula must alter the meaning as little as possible,"²⁷ but how little is "little"?

Parry, as previously noted (footnote 6), was aware that certain parts of a phrase are more essential to its overall meaning than are others. The "stylistic superfluity" which he described is made up of the conjunctions, adverbs, adjectives and other "small" modifiers which usually add little to the essential meaning of a phrase. In poetry which is metrically constrained, these words tend to be unstressed or unimportant to the metric structure. Cassidy discusses this "stylistic superfluity" as it applies to Old English poetry:

Yet all students of the oral formula in Old English recognize that the repeated words that compose it need not be identical in every detail. If the stressed bases are repeated, the unstressed (that is, weakly stressed) morphemes, bound or free, may be varied without destroying the formula. Thus nap-nihtscua (Seafarer 31a) and nipea nihtscua (Hawderer 104a), despite the inflectional difference, (which, however, does not change the verse type) are the "same" and support each other in proving this a formula. So þæt was god cýning, used repeatedly without change, is certainly a formula; preceded by ac it is still the same formula, and so it would be if ond were used

²⁷ Robert E. Diamond, The Diction of the Anglo-Saxon Metrical Psalms, *Janua Linguarum, Studia Memoriae Nicolai Van Wijk Dedicata, Series Practica*, No. 10 (The Hague: Mouton, 1963), p. 7.

rather than ac, is rather than was, or some other unstressed word were slipped in--say on þa þæt was god cyning.²⁸

Similarly, in discussing Yugoslavian epics, Lord indicates that variations in the adjectival modification of a word such as horse will not affect the formulaicity of his examples;²⁹ and Bruce Rosenberg writes of "approximations" where one or two words vary from one chanting of a formula to the next in folk sermons.³⁰

Some variations, however, involve parts of the phrase which carry a major portion of its meaning, and it is at this point that identification and definition of a given formula become truly difficult. We may return to Cassidy's argument:

We go from the small difference within the "same" formula to a larger kind of variation, that existing within a "formulaic system," when one of the stressed words is varied--for example if the synonymous til were used instead of god; or if hlaforð took the place of cyning. How many such alterations can be made before one feels that it is no longer the "same" system? Is þæt was til hlaforð in the same system with þæt was god cyning, or are we now in a different system? Or, since the first does not recur, must it be rejected as a formula despite its close similarity to the second? Is the repetition of words, even stressed words, all that makes a formula? Does the similarity among members of a formulaic system depend merely on word substitution, or is there some other feature or structure involved?³¹

Like Cassidy, many scholars have tried to deal with the above problem by establishing a hierarchy of formulas, formula-systems, formulaic themes, and type-scenes to order these phrase variations on a scale of "slight" to "major."³² The drawbacks to these hierarchies will be discussed

²⁸ Frederic G. Cassidy, "How Free Was the Anglo-Saxon Scop?" in Medieval and Linguistic Studies in Honor of Francis Peabody Magoun, Jr., ed. Jess B. Bessinger, Jr., and Robert P. Creed (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1965), p. 76.

²⁹ Singer of Tales, p. 52.

³⁰ Art of the American Folk Preacher, p. 51.

³¹ Cassidy, pp. 76-77.

³² See especially the works of the following three scholars: Parry,

later, but first it is important to describe some of the typical variations which occur within a blues formula.

Among the most common variations within a formula are changes in inflection. The tense and modification of verbs within a formula are quite variable; indeed, there seem to be no special stylistic rules governing which verb inflections are permitted in the blues. Note the treatment of the verb change in these examples of the formula I change my mind:

- 12 Baby fix me one more drink, and hug your daddy one more time
Keep on spilling my malted milk mama, until I change my mind
(JOHR-26)
- 13 I started to Heaven, but I changed my mind
But I'm going to Little Rock, where I can have better time
(DICKP-2)
- 14 Now you don't want me, when I was treating you nice and kind
Now it's too late baby; I have changed my mind (GILL-10)
- 15 I used to try to love you baby; a-loving you *in crime*
Some day you going to want to love the poor boy, and I'll be done
changed my mind (LOFW-2)
- 16 Well but some day some day people I'm going to change my mind
Well now I'm going to stop running at women, and staying drunk
all the time (WILLS-23)

It would seem that any possible tense or form of verb is acceptable in blues formulas, even such dialectal constructions as "will be done changed."

Similarly, nouns may be singular or plural within a formula without

"Studies in Epic Technique . . . I," p. 275, and "Studies in the Epic Technique of Oral Verse-Making. II. The Homeric Language of an Oral Poetry," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, 43 (1932), rpt. in *Making of Homeric Verse*, p. 329; Albert B. Lord, "Homer and Huxo II: Narrative Inconsistencies in Homer and Oral Poetry," *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, 69 (1938), 439-45, and "Composition By Theme in Homer and Southslavic Epos," *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, 82 (1951), 71-80; and Donald K. Fry, "Old English Formulas and Systems," 193-204, and "Old English Formulaic Themes and Type-Scenes," *Neophilologus*, 52 (1968), 48-54.

changing the essential meaning of that formula. Note the word dress in the following two couplets:

- 17 She pulls her dress up above her knees
She shakes her shimmy to who she please (COLLS-11)
- 18 Pull your dresses above your knees
Sell your stuff to who you please (McCOJ-27)

the word knee in the following examples:

- 19 Mmmmm hear my lonesome plea
I'm worried about my baby; down on my bended knee (HILK-3)
- 20 Oh babe oh baby down on my bended knees
Begging you now baby; don't leave me please (DAVIN-26)

and the word ring in these couplets:

- 21 I bought all her clothes; I bought her a diamond ring
Then along come a fatmouth; keep me shaking that thing (JACKG-21)
- 22 I ain't going to buy you no more pretty dresses; I ain't going to
even buy you no diamond rings
And I'm going to sell my V-Eight Ford, because I don't want a
doggone thing (WILLS-27)

(The negative inserted in example 22 will be discussed in the next chapter.)

As mentioned earlier, formulas may undergo changes in word-order; especially x-formulas, where there is no need to keep a specific rhyme-word at the end of the phrase. These syntactic changes follow the usual transformational rules of linguistics,³³ which generate surface-level sentences from deeper syntactic structures. Thus, the following underlined phrases

- 23 And the time coming; it's going to be so
You can't make the Winter babe, just dry long so (JOHR-8)

³³ One of the better-known descriptions of transformational grammar is Marina K. Burt, From Deep to Surface Structure: An Introduction to Transformational Syntax (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), but the book is not free from errors or faulty logic; see also Ann Borkin and David Peterson, eds., Where the Rules Fail: A Student's Guide: An Unauthorized Appendix to M. K. Burt's From Deep to Surface Structure (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Linguistics Club, 1972).

- 24 There come a time; I can't say no more
I'll be a-hearsing out my door (McCOJ-17)

- 25 I love my man; tell the cockeyed world I do
It's coming a time, that he'll sure love me too (WALLM-3)

are all surface structures generated from a deep syntactic structure which may be represented as time come. Couplet 24 exhibits the "there-insertion" transformational rule which re-orders the subject and predicate--a rule common to most dialects of English³⁴; whereas couplet 25 exhibits a similar type of transformational rule which seems more specific to the dialect of the singer.

Syntactic re-ordering, however, can also occur in r-formulas, as long as the rhyme-word maintains its final position. Note the following two examples:

- 26 And I stay at home baby; you don't treat me right
The best time I have girl, when you's out of my sight³ (CANN-2)

- 27 Tell my dad I won't be home tonight
My heart aches; said I'm not treated right (RAIN-25)

The underlined r-formula in couplet 27 exhibits syntactic re-ordering after undergoing a passive transformation³⁵; yet the rhyme-word right remains at the end of the phrase.

Further variations may occur in the type of sentence generated from the deep structure formula; that is, the same formula may be expressed as a declarative, interrogative, or imperative sentence:

- 28 I wring my hands, baby and I want to scream
And I woke up; I found it was all a dream (JAMS-6)

- 29 Did you ever wake up, twixt night and day
Had your arm around your pillow, where your good gal used to lay (LINC-5)

³⁴ See Burt, pp. 22-24.

³⁵ See Burt, pp. 35-41.

- 30 Wake up baby; please don't be so still
 Unless you fixing a good way to get your daddy killed
 (GIBC-16)

Note that, the re-ordering of the syntax in the above examples is made necessary by the demands of the different types of sentences they represent.

It was previously noted that the predications which underlie formulas should not be thought of as simple sentences. A further kind of formulaic variation illustrates this point: a formula may generate a complete sentence or only a part of a more complex sentence. Note the following two examples:

- 31 You know the baby kitten jumped up, oh and began to whine
 You know he didn't know the racket, but he had the same thing on
his mind (BURS-4)
- 32 Got up this morning with the same thing on my mind
 And the girl I'm loving, but she don't pay me no mind
 (BIGB-4)

The above couplets show the use of the same formula as a sentence, complete with subject and predicate (couplet 31), and as a complex prepositional phrase within the predicate of another sentence (couplet 32). This kind of formulaic variation is often a function of how the two half-lines are joined, which will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter XIV.

Up to this point, only slight variations in a formula have been described. Changes in inflection, syntax, or sentence-type have little effect on the essential meaning of a phrase. More profound changes occur, however, when one word is substituted for another within the same formula. This type of substitution has been recognized by other formula scholars; and is probably the source of most disagreements on the boundaries and definitions of the formula.

In general, these word substitutions may be termed "slot-fillers," in which a "slot" in the formula may be filled by a number of different words. The words capable of filling the slot must all have certain common semantic features, but what these features are is open to considerable argument. Parry, a pioneer scholar in so many ways, recognized slot-fillers as early as 1928, when he described formulas such as "and X replied," and "X answered him."³⁶ The "X" was a slot to be filled by the appropriate proper name. Magoun, following Parry's lead, applied the same slot-filling theory to Old English poetry:

On gear-dagum is one phrase in a system on x-dagum used to express the idea "long ago" and occurs twice elsewhere in *Beowulf* and in other poems as well. . . . With the substitution for gear, with the sense 'of yore,' of ær, eald, or fyrn, the formula remains unchanged in meaning and meter. . . .³⁷

Magoun's student, Robert P. Creed, subsequently described the slot-filling system in Old English in greater detail, showing how different human subjects could fit the "x-andswarode" formula.³⁸

Albert Lord, similarly, described slot-filling in Yugoslavian epics:

Instead of a u kuli, "in the tower," one can say a u dvoru, "in the castle," or a u kući, "in the house." . . . It is often helpful to write them as follows:

a u	kulī dvoru kući ³⁹
-----	-------------------------------------

and the same phenomenon has also been described by Rosenberg for folk sermons and McCulloh for an American lyric folksong cluster.⁴⁰

³⁶ "Traditional Epithet in Homer," pp. 10, 14.

³⁷ "Oral-Formulaic Character," p. 450.

³⁸ "The Andswarode-System in Old English Poetry," *Speculum*, 32 (1957), 523-28.

³⁹ *Singer of Tales*, p. 35.

⁴⁰ *Art of the American Folk Preacher*, pp. 49-50; and Judith M. McCulloh, "In the Pines: The Melodic-Textual Identity of an American Lyric Folksong Cluster," Diss. Indiana Univ. 1970, p. 73, respectively.

In the blues, slot-filling acts in much the same way as in other formulaic poetries. The parts of the formulaic predication most open to slot-filling are the arguments, especially those arguments which regularly generate nouns in the surface structure of the formula. Note the underlined formula in the following two couplets sung by Blind Lemon Jefferson:

- 33 Mmmm Papa Lemon's feeling so blue
Eagle-eyed mama's worrying me; what am I going to do
(JEFB-52)

- 34 Sometime I feel disgusted, and I feel so blue
I hardly know what in this world baby a good man can do
(JEFB-45)

The persona in couplet 33 is identified as Papa Lemon, which is most likely equivalent to the I in couplet 34; the singer has merely chosen to fill the argument slot in X feel so blue with a pronoun in the second couplet.

The underlined formula in the following example almost always includes the pronoun it in its surface manifestation:

- 35 I'm going away; it won't be long
I know you'll miss me from singing this lonesome song
(BEAN-3)

The it stands for time in this formula (see Appendix A for a further discussion of this formula), and though this pronoun almost always replaces the noun time, slot-filling allows the noun itself to surface, if the singer so chooses:

- 36 Well I'm going away; swear the time ain't long
If you don't believe I'm leaving daddy, count them days I'm gone
(JOHLS-1)

It might be argued that pronominalization is not true slot-filling, since the replacement of a noun by a pronoun is more a syntactic transformation than a clear lexical choice.⁴¹ Indeed Paul M. Postal believes that

⁴¹ See John Robert Ross, "On the Cyclic Nature of English Pro-

pronouns are only generated at an intermediate syntactic level, and are really articles, which brings into question the notion that pronouns are "substitutes" at all.⁴² It is clear, however, that the blues singer often has a choice between a noun and its corresponding pronoun in many formulas, and it is this choice which is central to the understanding of formulaic slot-filling.

The lexical choice in the argument of a formulaic predication may go well beyond simple pronominalization. Note the following two underlined phrases:

- 37 I went to the station; I looked up on the board
Well my train ain't here, but it's somewhere on the go
(DICKT-2)

- 38 I went to the depot; I looked up on the board
And the train had left; went steaming up the road (PATT-12)

It would seem, from these two examples, that a formula exists which may be represented as I went to the X, where X is defined as "a place where trains stop." The words station and depot both qualify to fill this slot, and the singer must make a lexical choice as to which word to use. The choice may be based on the singer's local dialect or on some idiosyncratic, aesthetic choice, but the option is there.

In the above two examples, the choice is limited to those words which mean "a place where trains stop," but some slots are open to a much wider range of lexical items. For the most part, these slots appear as

nominalization," in To Honor Roman Jakobson: Essays on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday, *Janua Linguarum, Studia Memoriae Nicolai Van Wijk* Dedicata, Series Maior, No. 23 (The Hague: Mouton, 1967), III, 1669-82, for a thorough discussion of this syntactic transformation.

⁴² "On So-Called 'Pronouns' in English," in Report of the Seventeenth Annual Round Table Meeting on Linguistics and Language Studies, ed. Francis P. Dineen, S.J. (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown Univ. Press, 1966), pp. 177-206.

the subjects of surface-level sentences. Note how different singers fill the subject slot in the following examples of X got the blues:

- 39 I got the blues; blue as I can be
Because these no-good gals trying to back-bite me (JOHN-2)
- 40 I cut that joker so long deep and wide
You got the blues, and still ain't satisfied (HURT-6)
- 41 When a woman gets the blues, she goes to her room and hides
When a man gets the blues, he catches a freight train and rides (SMIC-30)

The X slot can be filled with anything "capable of having the blues," whether it be human, animal, or perhaps, in a figurative sense, an inanimate object. Proper names, pronouns, and many nouns could all fit in the slot without destroying the logic of the phrase. Indeed, in example 41, it is essential that the X slot be filled by a different lexical item in the two lines, if the stanza is to make sense.

Slot-filling may also occur in the predicate of a formula, and indeed in the surface structure verb itself. But the verb in a formulaic sentence is the least changeable part of the formula; it usually carries the bulk of the meaning of the formula. The importance of the verb has similarly been pointed out in reference to Middle English formulaic verse.⁴³ Vladimir Propp, in discussing the basic structural units of the Russian fairy tale, also recognized that action, rather than personae, was of prime importance.⁴⁴

Within limits, however, lexical choice can occur in the verb slot in a formulaic sentence. Note the following examples:

⁴³ Finlayson, pp. 379-83.

⁴⁴ *Morphology of the Folktale*, ed. Louis A. Wagner, trans. Laurence Scott, 2nd ed., Publications of the American Folklore Society Bibliographic and Special Series, No. 9, Indiana Univ. Research Center in Anthropology, Folklore, and Linguistics, No. 10 (1928; rpt. Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1968), p. 21.

- 42 I woke up this morning; my good gal was gone
 Stood by my bedside, and I hung my head and, hung my head and
 moaned (BAKM-2)

- 43 I got up this morning; said my morning prayers
 Didn't have nobody to speak in my behalf (McCOJ-2)

The two underlined phrases are fairly synonymous, even though the verb is different in each case (this formula will be discussed in greater detail in Appendix B). The verb got up does imply a bit more activity than woke up; one may "wake up" but not necessarily "get up" out of bed. In actual usage in the blues, however, little distinction is made between these two verbs, and both are used in the same stanzaic contexts and by the same singers.

Similar lexical choices can be seen in the verbs in these two examples:

- 44 I got the blues so bad, it hurts my feet to walk
 I wouldn't hurt so bad, but it hurt my tongue to talk
 (LEWF-6)

- 45 Lord I woke up this morning; blues all around my bed
Had the blues so bad mama, till I couldn't raise up my head
 (JOHTO-9)

as well as in the following two phrases:

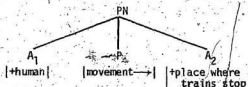
- 46 My man left me; he left me feeling bad
 He's the best *kind fellow* that I ever had (GLOV-3)

- 47 My woman quit me; got her another man
 And the way she had that thing on me, I couldn't raise my hand
 (GIBC-9)

In each of these examples, slight semantic differences might be attached to the individual verbs, but in practice these slot-fillers are usually interchangeable.

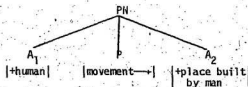
Given the possibility of slot-filling throughout the formulaic predication, it is best to represent the semantic structure of the formulas without surface-structure lexical items. Thus, the phrase I went to the station may be part of a formula which is represented by the following

generalized predication:



The A_1 argument is a slot which may be filled by any +human lexical item: I, You, My woman, The ticket agent and so on. The predicate, P , could conceivably be represented by such verbs as go to, walk to, make for, or run to. The second argument, A_2 , as noted earlier, might generate station or depot.

If formulas, then, are not bounded by specific lexical items, the problem becomes which semantic features in which part of the predication define the limits of variation of any given formula? For example, the above phrase, I went to the station, can also be shown to be a part of a more generalized predication:



The A_2 argument may now generate not only station and depot, but also house, jail, store, or any number of other buildings. The A_2 semantic features may be generalized still further to simply "+place," which would generate everything from buildings to cities to natural geographical locations in the lexical slot. Given such a generalized predication, all of the following phrases may be considered as members of the same formula:

- 48 You press my jumper, my overalls
 Went to the station; meet the cannonball

(COLLS-13)

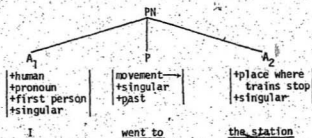
- 49 I'm going to Tishamingo to have my hambone boiled
These Atlanta women done let my hambone spoil (HOWE-2)
- 50 He stays out late every night
Comes back home, and wants to fight (JONM-8)
- 51 Went up on Kinnesaw Mountain; gave my horn a blow
Prettiest girl in Atlanta come stepping up to my door
 (McTW-7)
- 52 Now what you going to do babe, your dough-roller gone
Go in your kitchen, Lord and cook until she come home
 (ESTE-1)

The more generalized the features of the predication's components, the more inclusive will be the boundaries of the formula. Predications with more specific semantic features telescope into predications with more general semantic features to form a continuum upon which formulaic boundaries may be determined. This "telescoping" phenomenon is due to what semanticists call "entailment":

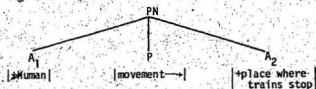
A relationship of entailment arises between two assertions whenever (the assertions being otherwise identical) an argument or predicate in one assertion is (included in the meaning of) an argument or predicate in the other.⁴⁵

Thus the phrase I went to the station may be seen as the initial assertion in a series of entailments:

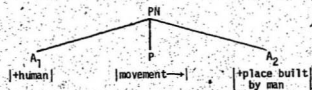
⁴⁵ Leech, p. 137. Leech used the technical term "hyponymy" to describe the relationship, "included within the meaning of."



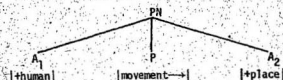
ENTAILS



ENTAILS



ENTAILS



There is no simple answer as to whether or not the above examples are all a part of the same formula. In the sense that they all stem from the same generalized predication, they are all related formulaically; but their differences from one another are also quite obvious. If the analyst is looking at deep-structure semantic similarities, then these examples are members of the same formula; if the analyst is interested in surface manifestations, then they belong to related but different formulas. This is why the formula is, in actuality, a theoretical construction, rather than a well-defined, predetermined structural entity. Rosenberg made this point in relation to the formulas of folk sermons:

With a fixed text in front of us we can define formulas as precisely or as liberally as we choose, but the singers are not thinking in terms of formulas or systems. One of the problems in defining these terms comes about because they are the scholar's attempts to impose a logical precision, a rationale, and a method where no such logical, rational method exists in the field--the singer's mind.⁴⁶

Whether the singer of blues was indeed entirely unconscious of the formulaic process will be discussed later, but even if a singer did conceive of blues as a formulaic system, at this late date it would be impossible to ask him to define the boundaries of the formulas he used.

One small clue we have to acceptable variations within a formula is the differences in phrase structure between the two repetitions of a line in A²A-type stanzas. The following line repetitions indicate some possible formula variations:

- 53 Dumb man asked her, who your man can be
 Dumb man asked her, who your regular can be (BELE-1)

⁴⁶ Bruce A. Rosenberg, "Oral Sermons and Oral Narrative," in Folklore: Performance and Communication, ed. Dan Ben-Amos and Kenneth S. Goldstein (The Hague: Mouton, 1975), p. 98.

- 54 And that good-looking meat going to carry me to my grave
And that good-looking meat going to take me to my grave (BOGL-23)
- 55 A-look a-here baby, you going too fast
 A-look a-here baby, you travelling too fast (CHATB-3)
- 56 If you ever been down mama, you know just how I feel
 If you ever been down mama, you know just how a prisoner feel (COLFB-1)
- 57 When your brown gets funny, everything you do she gets off
When your brown acts funny, everything you do she gets off (HICR-2)
- 58 I begun to walk; walked till my feet got soaking wet
I commenced to walking; walked till my feet got soaking wet (JEFB-30)
- 59 Mozelle you know you like your whiskey; don't forget I likes mine
too
Mozelle you know you love your whiskey; don't forget I love mine
too (McCL-21)
- 60 Don't fret and worry; and don't grieve after me
Don't grieve and worry; and don't fret after me (McTW-11)
- 61 Now old Bunker Hill, place that I long to stay
 Now old Bunker Hill, place that I wants to stay (STOK-23)
- 62 Singing now hey how long is you going to still do me wrong
 Singing now hey how long is you going to still treat me wrong (TORE-2)
- 63 I mean now some pretty mama done run my black snake home
 I mean now some pretty mama done drove my black snake home (NASHL-2)
- 64 But some old day, some old rainy day
 But some old day, some old sunny day (WELS-2)
- 65 I'm going to wake up in the morning; I believe I'll dust my bed
Well I'm going to get up in the morning; I believe I'll dust my
bed (WILLJ-21)

Most of the above examples show strong semantic and syntactic similarities between their underlined pairs, and one might assume that the singers conceived of these pairs as being variants of the same formula. But again, that is only an assumption. Although it is unusual, singers

do alter the repeated line by substituting one formula for another. Two examples of this rare stanzaic form are the following:

- 66 Now it's listen here pretty mama, a-what is on your mind
And it's tell me pretty mama, a-baby what is on your mind
 Says it looks like you're worried and bothered; grieving baby
 all the time (COLEK-2)
- 67 Now you men got these women; oh treat them nice and kind
Say you men got these sweet women; how come you don't be nice and
kind
 Because don't you know Little Hat got something; going to change
 your sweet woman's mind (JONL-9)

The semantic deep structures of the underlined pairs in examples 66 and 67 are obviously quite different, and formula substitution has almost certainly taken place. It is impossible, therefore, to state categorically that a variation in a repeated phrase of an A^2A -type stanza is due to slot-filling and not formula substitution.

Ultimately, the boundaries of a formula must be determined according to the questions the analyst wishes to answer. Whether or not got up this morning and woke up this morning are members of the same formula depends upon such questions as the following: How is the concept of "emergence from sleep" expressed in the x-position in the blues? How do blues singers distinguish between verbs of lesser and greater action? How do variations in the lexical choice of a surface structure verb affect the overall meaning and structure of the blues line, stanza, or song? Do some individual singers distinguish between got up and woke up as these verbs are used in their songs, while others do not?

With each of these questions, it may be necessary for the analyst to see the two phrases as either members of separate formulas or of the same formula. Indeed, even slight variations, such as I woke up and I wake up may be seen as members of two separate formulas, if the analyst

is investigating the use of different tenses in the blues. That the formula is flexible and that it is a theoretical construction, however, does not mean that formula-study is nothing more than intellectual game-playing. If one has a clear idea of the aspect of blues lyrics which one wishes to investigate, the boundaries of the blues formula become clear, and the formula itself becomes a useful analytical tool. For the same reasons, however, an inflexible hierarchy of formulas, systems, themes, and type-scenes cannot be established. Only a specific analytical focus can determine where to place formula boundaries on the continuum of a generalized predication.

Central to this point is the distinction between competence and performance discussed in the introduction to this study. The foregoing explanation of the blues formula has, of necessity, described blues competence. Even though examples were chosen from actual performances, the formulaic rules have been generalized to describe the entire corpus of the blues. A general, non-specific description is a description of competence. When, however, specific questions are asked about particular singers or songs, the analyst must focus on performance. Thus, as the analysis of blues structure moves from questions of a general nature to questions of a specific nature, compositional performance becomes more important than compositional competence.

Correspondingly, as analytic questions become more clearly and specifically focused, the boundaries of individual formulas become more tangible. At the level of compositional competence, a formula may move freely on the continuum of meaning and may have many different surface manifestations. But at the level of performance, the singer chooses a finite number of positions on this continuum for his own manifestations

of the formula, and thus the boundaries of the formula become quite apparent. Indeed, in the study of blues performance, one finds that one singer makes certain formulaic distinctions which another does not. At the level of competence, formulaic boundaries are theoretical and abstract; but at the level of performance, formulaic boundaries become concrete.

It is a paradox that the blues formula can be both a theoretical construction and a concrete reality of poetic structure. Its boundaries exist in the mind of the analyst, yet its manifestations appear, quite clearly, in the poetic language of the singer. The more general and unfocused one's research is, the more elusive is the blues formula. For this reason, studies of specific singers or specific repertoires make the best use of formulaic analysis, and indeed show more clearly the nature of formulaic systems than do large-scale overviews of the entire poetic corpus of the blues. We shall see, in Chapter XV, how clearly the boundaries of blues formulas show themselves, in the analysis of one singer's repertoire. For the moment, however, we must be content with the general, operational definition outlined above.

XIII EXTRAFORMULAIC ELEMENTS IN BLUES LYRICS

The blues is not made up entirely of unembellished formulas. The "building block" metaphor which recurs so often in the scholarship is a distorted image of the poetic formula. There are no sharp corners or hard surfaces to formulas, and they do not fit together in neat patterns. If this were the case, the blues would be a very mechanical and "unhuman" form of song.

The elements in the blues which "soften" the structure of the lyric are extraformulaic elements, and in this chapter these peculiar and diverse structures will be described. Since the words used to describe these elements are often longer than the actual elements themselves, I have found it convenient to use the following abbreviations:

Para	=	paralinguistic element
X	=	exclamatory element
Voc	=	vocatory element
PN _{loc}	=	locutionary element
PN _{aux}	=	auxiliary element
PN _{emb}	=	embedding element
PN _{adj}	=	adjectival element
PN _{adv}	=	adverbial element
Neg	=	negation element

In the preceding chapter, it was shown that the blues singer has a considerable choice as to the surface manifestations of a formula. Lexis and syntax are often variable, and semantic features may be adjusted, to a great extent, to fit different positions on a continuum of meaning. The options, however, are not limited to the internal structure of the for-

formulaic predication. The predication itself might be modified or embellished in a number of ways by words and phrases external to its structure.

When Parry wrote of "stylistic superfluity" which was not a part of the "essential idea" of the formula,¹ he was describing the kinds of external modifications of the formulaic predication to be described here. Because these stylistic superfluities are external to the structure of the formulaic predication, they might be termed "extraformulaic elements."

These extraformulaic elements may take a number of different forms, ranging from paralinguistic utterances to complex predications in their own right. To call these elements stylistic superfluities, however, is a misnomer, since the individual style of a blues singer's lyrics is often determined by his use of extraformulaic elements. The embellishment of the basic formulaic phrase, whether internal or external to the predication, is fundamental to blues style.

THE PARALINGUISTIC ELEMENT (Para)

Perhaps the simplest type of extraformulaic element is the paralinguistic utterance (Para)--the moan, hum, or cry. These elements usually function as emotive adjuncts to formulas. The nasal moan, which might be represented as mmmmmm, is probably the most common paralinguistic device in the blues and it often occurs at the beginning of the line.

¹ Milman Parry, "The Traditional Epithet in Homer," in The Making of Homeric Verse: The Collected Papers of Milman Parry, ed. and trans. Adam Parry (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1971), p. 11; originally published as L'épithète traditionnelle dans Homère: Essai sur un problème de style homérique (Paris: La Société Editrice Les Belles Lettres, 1928).

Indeed, it sometimes fills the entire first half-line as a kind of emotional preparation for the r-formula:

1. Mmm, corn-liquor on my mind
If you catch me out drinking, I'm not drinking just to keep from crying (BLAAL-3)

The nasal moan also prefaces x-formulas, as in the following coupTet:

2. Mmm I've been asking for a favour; even I ask the good Lord above
I cried oh Lord listen; please send back the woman I love (TOWH-1)

or it may preface an r-formula in a line:

3. You can't give your sweet woman everything she wants in one time
Well boys she get rambling in her brain; mmm some other man on her mind (JOHR-21)

On rare occasions, this paralinguistic element may even occur within the phrase:

4. Up a-yonder she goes friend; please run try to call her back
Because that sure was one woman I did mm love and like (WILK-10)

Other paralinguistic elements act in much the same way as does the nasal moan:

5. Ohhhh, I ain't got no mama now
Going to be another war; don't need no mama nohow (HULL-5)
6. Oh he took me to the judge with my head hanging low
And the judge said hold your head up, for you are bound to go (MOAL-4)
7. The man I love is oh so good to me
I'm just crazy; want the world to see (JOHN-23)
8. When I get you mama, we going to move on the outskirts of town
Because I don't want nobody, ooo always hanging around (WASBS-8)
9. Lord she treat me like a hog; treated me like a dog
She treated me like a bear one morning, and then ah just like a log (NOBL-1)

- 10 Aw wake up mama; wake up and don't sleep so sound
Give me what you promised me, before you lay down (JAMJ-1)

THE EXCLAMATORY ELEMENT (X)

Similar to the paralinguistic utterances are words and phrases of exclamation (X). Although these utterances contain semantic meaning as lexical items within the blues singer's vocabulary, their main function is emotive and their semantic structure is not integrated with that of the formulaic predication. Such words as well, now, Lord, and yeah are common extraformulaic elements in this category.

As with paralinguistic elements, these exclamations may occur at the beginning, at the end, or in the midst of a phrase, as well as filling an entire x-position:

- 11 Lord Lord, now I ain't got a friend
Now one gal is in jail, and the other one is in the pen (MONTE-2)
- 12 Now if I had just a-listened, what my mama said
I would have been at home Lord in my faro's bed (ESTE-10)
- 13 I'm going to sing this verse, and I ain't going to sing no more
I got them blues, and I'm sure Lord got to go (HICR-7)
- 14 Now don't you think I know my baby love me so
She make five dollars and she give me four (STOK-5)
- 15 Now you can't have me Elsie, now now and my partner too
Because your no-good way baby, oh baby that won't do (McCL-15)
- 16 Well, what evil have I done
Well it must be something my nan have heard before he gone (JOHLS-1)
- 17 Well now I have a woman; I try to treat her right
Well now she will get drunk, ooo well well and fuss and fight
all night (HOGG-1)

- 18 Well I went down yeah to the churchhouse; yes well they called
on me to pray
Got on my knees now mama; I didn't know not not a word to say
(PETM-1)
- 19 Yeah I don't believe no woman in the whole round world do right
She act like an angel in the daytime; crooked as the Devil at night
(FULB-13)

THE VOCATORY ELEMENT (Voc)

Neither the paralinguistic nor the exclamatory elements bear any direct semantic or syntactic relationship to the formulas which they modify. There is another type of extraformulaic element, however, which, though similar to the two elements already described, does relate more directly to the formula to which it is attached. This extraformulaic element might be called "vocatory" (Voc), since it calls attention to the one whom the singer is addressing. Among the most common vocatory elements are baby, gal, woman, mama, or other terms for "female," or conversely daddy or papa for male addressees, or Lord for invocations to the deity.

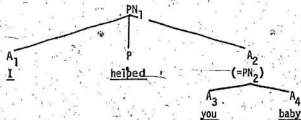
The positions of the vocatory elements are the same as those of paralinguistic and exclamatory elements. They tend to float quite freely within the structure of the blues line:

- 20 There's no use a-worrying, baby about the days being long
The black snake is got the dough; you can't roll him from home
(JOHLO-10)
- 21 I helped you baby, when your kinfolks turned you down
Now you loving someone else baby, and you done left this town
(DARB-1)
- 22 When you have a feeling that I sure gal don't want no more
You just might as well leave her; even if it hurts you so
(GRAN-2)

- 23 You going to wake up one of these mornings, mama baby and I'll
be gone
And you may not never papa see me in your town no more
(HAWK-5)
- 24 You know I done woman all in this world I could
But I found out baby, you didn't mean no good (CHATP-14)
- 25 Ohhhh, baby why don't you let me go
Daddy if you don't want me, had a-plenty more (SPIV-1)
- 26 I been your dog, ever since I been your gal
You know I love you pretty papa; Love you each and everywhere
(RUPO-2)
- 27 Good Lord good Lord, send me an angel down
Can't spare you no angel, but I'll swear I'll send you a teasing
brown (McTW-13)

Note that the word Lord can be used either as an exclamatory element or as a vocatory element, depending upon whether the deity is actually being addressed.

The relationship between a vocatory element and a formula may take at least two forms. It may correlate directly with an argument in the formulaic predication, or it may only refer to the one addressed without having any direct correlation to any specific part of the predication. In couplet 21, for example, the word baby is directly associated with the argument you in the formula I helped you, and may be represented as part of the surface predication of this formula thusly:



The correlation between you and baby is, in fact, an "embedded predication"

within the formulaic predication (PN_1). This embedded predication (PN_2) is an equative predication, best represented by two opposable arguments without a predicate.² The embedded predication may be read as you is baby, since baby refers directly to the you of the formula.

In the case of couplet 21, the vocatory element has attached itself to the internal structure of the formula; that is, the PN_2 , you is baby, attached itself to the A_2 argument of the formulaic predication, PN_1 , forming a deep structure which is something like I helped you you is baby. With the redundant features of this deep-level sentence eliminated, the phrase I helped you-baby is formed. In example 24, however, there is no such semantic correlation between the word woman and the formula in which it is found; rather it is assumed that the one whom the singer is addressing when saying You know I done all in this world I could is synonymous with the invocation, woman.

THE LOCUTIONARY ELEMENT (PN_{loc})

The above explanation of how such simple vocatories as baby or woman fit into the structure of the formula may seem overly complex, but an understanding of this process becomes increasingly necessary as one progresses to more complicated types of extraformulaic elements. In general, the more complicated extraformulaic elements may be seen as predications which, in one way or another, impose themselves upon the structure of the

² For a discussion of equative predications and how they are derived from two-place predications, see Geoffrey Leech, Semantics (Harmondsworth, U.K.: Penguin Books, 1974), pp. 268-69.

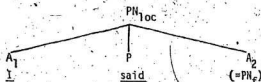
formulaic predication. Thus, given a formulaic predication, PN_f , and an extraformulaic predication, PN_e , the resultant phrase in the blues line will be a combined predication, PN_{fe} .

This combination of a formula and an extraformulaic element may take a number of different forms. In couplet 21, the extraformulaic element became an embedded predication within the formulaic predication, but the reverse process also occurs. One example of this reverse process is the locutionary element (PN_{loc}), which embeds the formulaic predication within the extraformulaic predication. This element includes such phrases as I said, I cried, and tell me, which preface an assertion:

- 28 Mama here I am, right out in the cold again
Says the woman that I'm loving got brains just like a turkey hen
(ARNK-9)
- 29 Women and children were screaming; saying mama where must we go
The flood water have broke the levee, and we ain't safe here no
more (JOHLO-19)
- 30 Now my little woman, I said she's sweet as she can be
Every time I kiss her, send a cold chill run over me
(FULB-16)
- 31 I feel like falling down on bended knees
Cried Lord have mercy, if you please (McCOJ-15)
- 32 Crying mama mama mama you know canned heat killing me
Canned heat don't kill me, crying babe I'll never die
(JOHLO-5)
- 33 Mmmm, what's the matter now
Tell me what's the matter baby; I don't like no black snake nohow
(JEFB-18)
- 34 Eat my breakfast here; my dinner in Tennessee
I told you I was coming; baby won't you look for me
(HURT-2)

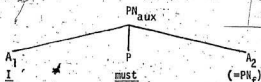
The locutionary element may be thought of as a predication with an open slot in its A_2 argument, which must be filled by a formulaic predication: I said PN_f , tell me PN_f , cried PN_f . The PN_f is embedded in

the locutionary predication in the A₂ slot:³



THE AUXILIARY ELEMENT (PN_{aux})

Similar embedding of the formulaic predication (PN_f) occurs in another type of extraformulaic element. Auxiliaries to verbs are also PN_f-embedders. In the last chapter, it was shown that verbs may undergo tense change in different manifestations of the formula; many of these changes involve the use of the auxiliary verbs have and be. These verbs, as well as modal auxiliaries such as will (going to), must (have to), may, ought, can, do, shall, dare, and need,⁴ are, in fact, extraformulaic elements. As with the locutionary predications, these elements have a slot in their A₂ arguments which must be filled by an embedded PN_f:



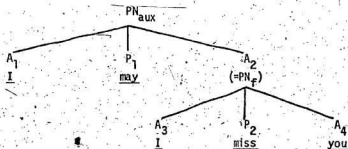
The following are some examples of this type of extraformulaic element:

³ This description is based upon the "performative introduction rule," as described by Leech, pp. 352-55, but has been simplified for the purposes of this study. The tree, as drawn below, is, in fact, only a part of a larger predication.

⁴ There is considerable debate over which verbs to include in the category of "modal." This list is derived from Martin Joos, The English Verb: Form and Meanings (Madison and Milwaukee: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1964), p. 76.

- 35 I'll sing you these verses, and it didn't take long.
If you want to hear any more, you'll have to buy this song (JACK-5)
- 36 Now I may miss you, but I don't think I will
I'm going to get me a new woman to love me till I get my fill (CARRL-22)
- 37 Oh I don't mind drowning, but the water is so cold.
If I must leave this good world, I want to leave it brave and bold (SMIC-38)
- 38 I can sit right here, and look on Jackson Avenue
I can see everything that my good woman do (LEWF-11)
- 39 Oh I woke up this morning, honey about the break of day
I hugging the pillow, where my fair brown did lay (OWEL-1)
- 40 I got a letter mama; you ought to heard it read
Says you coming back baby, and I'll be almost dead (THPA-1)

The embedding of the formula I miss you in couplet 36 might be represented by the following diagram:



In couplet 35, the phrase you'll have to buy this song exhibits double embedding: the formula you buy this song is embedded in the A₂ of the PN_{aux} you have to PN_f, which in turn is embedded in the A₂ of another PN_{aux}, you will PN_{aux}.

OTHER EMBEDDING ELEMENTS (PN_{emb})

There are many other verbs which act like these auxiliaries in that

they embed predications within their A_2 arguments. Verbs such as begin to, hear, want to, make, see and many others act in this manner, and many of these verbs are regularly used as extraformulaic elements in the blues:

- 41 I began to moan, and I began to cry
My sweet man went away; you know the reason why (JOHLI-2)
- 42 Down in the levee, camp number nine
You can pass my house; honey you can hear me cry (BOGL-2)
- 43 Now Mr. depot agent, don't you make me cry
Did my baby stop here; did she keep on by (WILLS-12)
- 44 Once I couldn't stand to see you cry
But I feel all the same, man, if you die (SPAN-1)

How these verbs affect the meaning or essence of the formulaic predication is a difficult linguistic and philosophical problem, but many of them describe how the persona relates to the embedded predication; for example, how he perceives it, feels about it, starts it, stops it, and so on. J. L. Austin probably comes closest to describing how these verbs are used in formulaic predications:

It has come to be seen that many specially perplexing words embedded in apparently descriptive statements do not serve to indicate some specially odd additional feature in the reality reported, but to indicate (not to report) the circumstances in which the statement is made or reservations to which it is subject or the way in which it is to be taken and the like.⁵

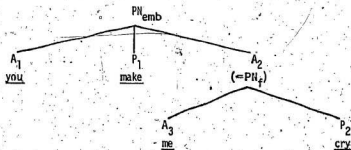
Thus, the statement I cry in couplets 41 to 43 above is prefaced by embedding elements which indicate the circumstances in which we are to understand the situation I cry. Couplet 44 shows the statement you cry prefaced by two PN_{emb} s: I stand and I see.

Unlike auxiliary elements, some of these embedding elements do not have to contain the same subjects as those of the phrases which they preface.

⁵ *How to Do Things With Words*, ed. J. O. Urmson and Marina Sbisa, 2nd ed. (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1975), p. 3.

Auxiliaries must always show complete synonymy between their subjects and those of the phrases which they preface. The diagram for the phrase I may miss you given above illustrates this: the I of A_1 must be synonymous with the I of A_3 . If this were not the case, then such strange and ungrammatical constructions as I may she miss you would occur. The subjects of some PN_{emb} s, of course, must be synonymous with those of the phrases which they preface--the verb begin in example 41, for example--and this indicates that further classification of these other embedding elements is necessary. But for the purposes of this study, such fine distinctions are not very important.

A diagram showing the embedding of a formula within the predication of an embedding element (PN_{emb}) would be very similar to that of auxiliary and locutionary elements:⁶



Note that the embedding of the formula I cry within the PN_{emb} you make transforms its subject from the word I to the word me. This is because a deeper structure predication of the formula is (thuman, +pronoun, +singular, +first person) cry, which can generate the subject I or me, depending upon the constraints of the surface manifestation of the formula.

⁶ Indeed, the locutionary elements are special kinds of PN_{emb} s, but again the distinctions are not very important for this study.

There are hundreds of possible embedding elements in English, but only a small number of them are used with any regularity in the blues. Verbs such as make, want to, see, know, hear, try to, and hate to are very common PN_{emb} s in the blues, and they may well be thought of as a formulaic substructure within the greater structure of the lyric. Indeed, the embedding elements, more than any of the other extraformulaic elements, test the outer limits of the meaning of a given formula; but as stated in the last chapter, whether I cry and you make me cry should be considered members of the same formula or not is dependent upon the direction and scope of one's analysis. What can be affirmed, however, is that I cry and you make me cry both include the same underlying, generalized predication within their structures.

THE ADJECTIVAL AND ADVERBIAL ELEMENTS (PN_{adj} AND PN_{adv})

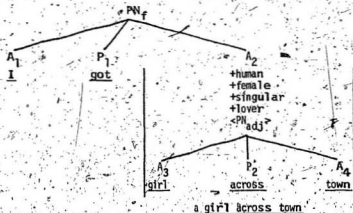
The locutionary, auxiliary, and embedding elements all share the common feature of embedding the formulaic predication (PN_f) within their A_2 arguments. Two other types of extraformulaic elements undergo a different kind of attachment to the PN_f . These are the adjectival (PN_{adj}) and adverbial (PN_{adv}) elements, and they closely correspond to adjectives and adverbs in the surface-level sentences of formulas. When either of these elements is used, they describe or embellish an argument or predicate; indeed, they attach themselves as semantic features to the arguments or predicates within a formulaic predication. Instead of embedding themselves within a slot in the formulaic predication (as is the case with some vocatory elements), they embed themselves in the very list of features of an argument or predicate.

This is referred to as "downgrading," wherein an entire predication is "downgraded" to a semantic feature.⁷ The following examples illustrate the use of adjectival elements in the blues:

- 45 I got a girl across town; she crochets all the time
Mama if you don't quit crocheting, you going to lose your mind
(JEFB-22)
- 46 Just as sure as a sparrow mama, babe flying in the air
I got a sweet loving mama in this world somewhere (LINC-2)
- 47 Highway Fifty runs right by my baby's door
Now if I don't get the girl I'm loving, ain't going down Highway
Fifty-one no more (McCL-3)

In each of the above cases, the words girl and mama, which are both generated from semantic features such as +human, +female, +singular, +(potential) lover, are qualified by adjectival elements: a prepositional phrase, adjectives, and a relative clause, respectively.

The phrase I got a girl across town may be represented by the following diagram:



Note that the entire PN_{adj} is downgraded to a semantic feature of the

⁷ See Leech, pp. 149-54.

A_2 argument of the formulaic predication. In couplet 46, the A_2 of the formulaic predication contains two adjectival elements within its semantic features: the adjectives loving and sweet.

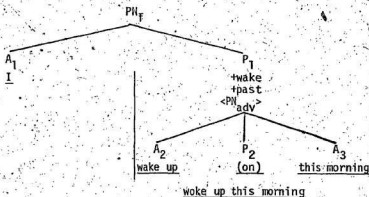
In similar fashion, adverbial elements (PN_{adv}) act on predicates within the formulaic predication:

48 Have you ever woke up with them bullfrogs on your mind (HARW-2)

49 I woke up weak and dizzy; he told me that I would
But all my pain had left me; he really done me good (BRYL-2)

50 Mama I woke up this morning; mama had the sundown blues
And my fair brown told me I refuse to go (DADD-1)

Just as adverbial elements become attached to the semantic features of arguments, adverbial elements embed themselves in the semantic features of predicates:



In the above diagram, note that the predicate, P_2 , of the PN_{adv} is deleted in the surface structure. It does appear as in or on in such sentences as I woke up on Monday morning or I woke up in the morning.

One of the more interesting features of the complex extraformulaic elements (locutionary, auxiliary, embedding, adjectival and adverbial)

is that, because they are well-formed predications in themselves, they may also function as formulas. This happens when these elements are used without being attached to a PN_f predication. In theory, one may say that when PN_e predications are attached to a PN_f which is devoid of semantic features (an empty or null set), then the PN_e is itself equivalent to a PN_f .

The following examples illustrate this point:

- 51 I say mama told me; papa told me too
All of these Winston women going to be the ruin of you (HILK-2)
- 52 Sometime I believe I will; sometime I believe I won't
Sometime I believe I do; sometime I believe I don't (LENF-11)
- 53 I'm drunk and disorderly; I don't care
If you want to, you can pull off your underwear (DORST-13)
- 54 Woke up this morning; get my shoes
I love a woman; that I can't give it to (OWEN-2)
- 55 It was early this morning; I was laying out on my floor
I was keeping daily watch on my wall, so that granddaddy won't
crawl in my house no more (SHOR-5)

In couplet 51, the PN_{loc} mama told me stands alone without prefacing another assertion in the line; in couplet 52, the PN_{aux} I will refers to some action which is not explicit in the line; in couplet 53, the PN_{emb} you want to indirectly prefices the statement you can pull off your underwear in the r-formula, but it stands alone as an x-formula in the line; in couplet 54, the common formula I love a woman (see Appendix A) also quite often manifests itself as a PN_{adj} , as was seen in example 47; and in couplet 55, the PN_{adv} this morning modifies no particular predicate and therefore appears as a formula, modifying the word it, which is empty of meaning and indicates an empty semantic set. Note also that several of the above examples include extraformulaic elements attached to

these "upgraded" extraformulaic elements: a PN_{loc} in couplet 51, a PN_{adv} and a PN_{emb} in couplet 52, and a PN_{adv} in couplet 55. Indeed, it is quite common for extraformulaic predication to be embellished themselves by other extraformulaic elements.

The adverbial element is more likely to be "upgraded" to a formulaic predication than any of the other extraformulaic predications. This is especially true of adverbials which place an action within a time period. For example, the PN_{adv} this morning almost always appears with the formula I woke up (as in couplet 50), but it may also appear as a formula in its own right, as in couplet 55.

It is, indeed, difficult to know whether to label certain time-adverbials as formulas or extraformulaic elements. Note the following couplet:

- 56 I got up this morning just about the break of day
I could hear *a bunch of* bloodhounds a-coming down my way
(COLLS-14)

The first line of example 56 may be described as a single r-formula with two final PN_{adv} elements: this morning and just at the break of day.

It is also clear, however, that the phrase I got up this morning is one of the most frequent x-formulas in the blues (see Appendix B), and that it is combined with many different r-formulas. Similarly, the time-adverbial at the break of day appears independently of the formula I got up this morning, as in this example:

- 57 Captain rung the bell this morning just at the break of day
Said now it's time for you to go rolling; buddy why don't you be
on your way (ARNK-29)

Bearing this in mind, the first line of couplet 56 may be seen as two separate formulas: I got up this morning and it was at the break of day, wherein the words it was have been deleted in a surface structure transformation.

There are some time-adverbials, however, which are permanently attached to the PN_f of a formula. These adverbials form the final part of an r-formula, and thus carry the rhyme of the line. Note the following examples:

58. Now pack up my clothes; shove into your door
I'm leaving this morning mama, I won't be back no more (BIGB-17)
59. I'm going to west Texas; won't be back till fall
If the blues overtake me, I won't be back at all (THOR-6)
60. Pack up my suitcase; give me my hat
No use asking me babe, because I'll never be back (VINC-13)

All three underlined phrases share the same generalized predication, +human come/be back, but the first two examples include a final time-adverbial attached to the basic predication. The attachment of these time-adverbials gives the phrases different rhymes--more, all and back, respectively--which means that these three phrases cannot be considered as members of the same formula, according to the operational definition being used in this study.

The time-adverbials in couplets 58 and 59 are essential to the rhyme of the formula, and therefore cannot be detached from the phrases which they modify without destroying the rhyming properties of the formula. Since they cannot be detached from the predication I be back, these time-adverbials cannot rightly be called extraformulaic elements. Extraformulaic elements must be free to attach or detach themselves from formulas. These time-adverbials, therefore, are an integral part of the basic structures of the formulaic predications in which they are found; they are as much a part of their formulas as the argument I or the predicate come/be. As we have seen before, the constraint of rhyme in the blues is one of the fundamental facts of the lyric form, and the "fusing" of a

predication and a time-adverbial, as shown here, is a prime example of the power of rhyme in the blues.

THE NEGATION ELEMENT (Neg)

There is one final embellishment on the formulaic predication which is similar to the extraformulaic elements already discussed, but which is also significantly different. This element is negation (neg) and it occurs in many blues lyrics. Many formulas which are usually expressed in positive terms may also be expressed in negative terms by the application of a negation element. Note the following two couplets:

- 61 It's hard to love you Lilly; you love somebody else
 I believe it's going to make me grieve myself to death
 (TOMS-1)
- 62 I says I love my baby better than I do myself
 If she don't love me, she won't nobody else (ALET-12)

The major difference in the two underlined phrases is one of negation: the phrase in couplet 62 is the negative of the one in couplet 61. It is not necessary for the purposes of this study to investigate the complex nature of negation in semantics. Leech has written that for a predication X, one may formulate its negative, not-X.⁸ Similarly, for a given formulaic predication, PN_F, a negation element may be attached to it to form not-PN_F.

Some formulas do not lend themselves as readily to negation as others. For example, the common formula I woke up this morning may, logically, be negated: I didn't wake up this morning. It is hard to conceive of how this sentence could be used in the blues, however, although

⁸ Leech, p. 165.

it is a perfectly well-formed and understandable assertion. Indeed, there are no examples of negation for the formula I woke up this morning in the corpus under analysis. Some formulas, on the other hand, only appear in the negative; for instance, the r-formula it won't be long (see Appendix A) never occurs in the positive, it will be long, in the corpus under study. Like I didn't wake up this morning, the phrase it (time) will be long is an absurd concept which is not likely to be found in blues lyrics.

Negation⁴⁵, in many ways, is a much more fundamental alteration in the meaning of a predication than any of the other extraformulaic elements. To understand this, one must again look at how entailment applies in blues formulas. In all the previous types of extraformulaic elements, the embellished formula entailed the unembellished formula: Mm I woke up entails I woke up; Lord I woke up entails I woke up; I said I woke up entails I woke up; I woke up this morning entails I woke up, and so on. The negation of a predication, however, does not entail the positive of the same predication: I didn't wake up does not entail I woke up.

This logical peculiarity places negation apart from the other extraformulaic elements. One may argue, with some justification, that the negative and the positive of the same predication are not members of the same formula because they lack entailment. Conversely, one may argue that, philosophically, a negative and a positive are merely mirror-images of each other and that, therefore, they deserved to be placed within the confines of the same formulaic boundaries. Again, the choice must come down to the analyst's own perceptions and the requirements of the analysis.

The blues singer's choice of adding one or more extraformulaic elements to a formula in his song allows him to expand or lengthen the formula

considerably. Earlier, it was stated that there is no metrical demand upon the blues formula; it is largely because of the extraformulaic elements that the formula is free of metrical demands. Depending upon the metrical structure of the tune which the blues singer chooses for his song, he can expand or contract any given formula by using extraformulaic elements.⁹ Note these two manifestations of the following formula:

63 Beef to me baby; me and pork chops do not agree
I love you, but I don't like the way that you are giving me
 (DARB-2)

64 Don't believe I'm sinking, believe what a hole I'm in
You don't believe I love you Lord, think what a fool I been
 (BRAC-6)

In couplet 63, the formula I love you is unembellished, whereas in couplet 64 the same formula includes negation, embedding, and exclamatory elements. It would be difficult, if not impossible, for the two underlined phrases to fill the same metrical demand, yet by the definition of the blues formula adopted in this study, the two phrases are clearly a part of the same formula.

Paralinguistic, exclamatory, and vocatory elements function more readily than do the other elements in filling metrical gaps. In comparison with such elements as PN_{emb} s, PN_{adj} s, and PN_{adv} s, they alter the semantic message of the formula very little, nor are they as highly integrated in the predications of the formulas which they embellish. These factors make such elements much easier to insert in a formula without regard to the specific context in which the formula is being used.

⁹ Gregory Nagy, "Formula and Meter," in Oral Literature and the Formula, ed. Benjamin A. Stolz and Richard S. Shannon, III (Ann Arbor: Center for the Coordination of Ancient and Modern Studies, Univ. of Michigan, 1976), pp. 239-72, similarly states that Homeric formulas are metrically flexible, and that, indeed, the formula determines the metrics rather than metrics determining the formula.

The non-complex extraformulaic elements--paralinguistic, exclamatory, and vocatory--besides having an emotive and metrical function, are also used by many singers to make their lyrics stylistically distinctive. Tommy McClennan's lyrics are punctuated by the continual use of the exclamatory word now:

- 65 Now I told you once now baby now; ain't going to tell you no more
(McCL-1)

Peetie Wheatstraw became famous for his paralinguistic and exclamatory ooo well well, which prefaced most of his r-formulas in the second line of the blues couplet:

- 66 When she says she want loving, don't tell her that you too tired
Some other man might flag her train, ooo well well and she might
let him ride (WHEA-27)

Even the locutionary element could be used to create a distinctive style. Tommy Johnson's individualistic style is partly due to the locutionary crying which prefaced many of his formulas:

- 67 Crying mama mama mama crying canned heat killing me
(JOHTO-5)

The "stylistic superfluities," to use Parry's term, have been shown to be far from superfluous. There is not a singer who does not make use of extraformulaic elements, and not a single blues song in which these elements cannot be found. As much as anything else, these elements allow the blues singer to be creative and individualistic within the confines of a traditional formulaic system. These elements also allow the singer to expand and alter the meaning of the formula, giving him more flexibility in the composition of the blues. As a final illustration of the importance of the extraformulaic element, observe the following song, which is analyzed for extraformulaic elements. Each element is underlined, and below the underlined word or phrase appears the appropriate extra-

formulaic symbol:

68. I've got your picture, and I'm going to put it in a frame

And then if you leave town, we can find you just the same

Now if you don't love me, please don't dog me around

If you dog me around, I know you put me down

I know my baby thinks the world and all of me

Every time she smiles, she shines her light on me

Oh I said fair brown something's going on wrong

This here woman I love, she's done been here and gone

Oh listen fair brown; don't you want to go

Going to take you across the water, where that brownskin man can't go

Lord I'm worried here; worried everywhere

Now I just started home, and I'll not be worried there

Lord I'm tired of being married; tired of this settling down

I only want to stay like I am, and slip from town to town

(JEFB-14)

Note that some "superfluous" words have not been marked as extra-formulaic elements. Words such as and, then, and if, though certainly extraformulaic in the sense that they are external to the formulaic predication, have a different function from the words and phrases discussed here. These and other words and phrases will be explained in the next chapter.

XIV FORMULAS INTO LINES, LINES INTO STANZAS, STANZAS INTO SONGS

In the two preceding chapters, the flexibility of the formula was demonstrated. The combination of different surface manifestations of a formula with its many possible extraformulaic embellishments allows the blues singer considerable freedom within the structure of the lyric. The singer's choice of combinations, however, extends well beyond the internal structure of the formula. In combining formulas to form lines, lines to form stanzas, and stanzas to form songs, the singer is once more confronted with both options and limitations.

In this chapter, the nature of the superorganic structure of blues lyrics will be described. How the small, basic units of the blues, the formulas, are juxtaposed to form the larger units of lines, stanzas and songs will be outlined. As the focus of this chapter moves from the smaller lyrical units to the larger ones, it will become increasingly difficult to discover clear and consistent structural patterns. This phenomenon is further proof that the fundamental unit of the blues is the formula, and that other, larger units grow out of this elemental structure.

FORMULAS INTO LINES

The joining of an x- and r-formula to make a line is a complex procedure. Since each formula is a predication, a complete thought, the singer must decide which thoughts to juxtapose within a line, and in which of several ways to juxtapose them. The basic criterion which the singer uses in these juxtapositions is logic; the linked formulas have

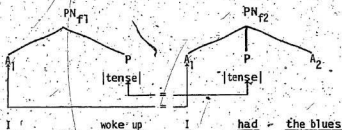
to be logical in terms of the two complete thoughts expressed, and also have to be logical in terms of how the two complete thoughts are related to each other within the line.

When an x-formula and an r-formula are linked in a line, they must not create an overall thought or image which is ambiguous, meaningless, or absurd in terms of what is expected of blues lyrics. Of course, logic is highly subjective, especially within a poetic tradition, and what is absurd or meaningless to one singer may make perfect sense to another. There are, however, some general observations which can be made about the logic of linked formulas in a line.

There must be certain agreements in terms of number, person, and tense between one formula and the next. For example, note the following line:

1 I woke up this morning; I had the blues three different ways
(THOR-13)

The two formulas in this line, I woke up this morning and I had the blues three different ways, agree in that both contain the semantic features for first person, singular pronoun in their A_1 arguments; indeed, the two A_1 arguments must refer to the same persona, and not two different I's. The predicates of the two formulas, wake up and have also agree in terms of the tenses in their semantic features. Ignoring the adverbial modifiers in the two formulas, the agreement of their arguments and predicates may be represented by the following diagram:



If either of the agreements in the above example are broken, the resulting formula-juxtapositions become illogical:

- 2 *I woke up this morning; they had the blues three different ways¹
- 3 *I woke up this morning; I will have the blues three different ways

In example 2, the lack of agreement between the two A_1 arguments results in a rather peculiar construction; indeed the line is a non sequitur, since the first assertion does not bear any overt relationship to the second. Such a construction is not found in the corpus under analysis, and it would most likely not arise in the blues at all. Example 3 is also clearly a non sequitur, since the past action of the x-formula bears no overt relationship to the future action of the r-formula. This type of line is also absent from the blues corpus under analysis. In their separate ways, both lines defy the logic expected of blues poetry.

Argument and predicate agreement in linked formulas is a relatively simple example of logical juxtaposition in the blues. Of more complexity, however, is the matching-up of two formulas so that the overall message is logical. There may be complete agreement between corresponding arguments and predicates in two linked formulas, but the message or image of the x-formula might conflict with that of the r-formula. If, for

¹ An asterisk (*) before a phrase, as used in most linguistic scholarship, denotes an illogical or ungrammatical construction.

example, the singer begins his line with the x-formula I woke up this morning, he must choose an r-formula which completes the line in a logical and meaningful way as juxtaposed to that specific x-formula. Example 1 illustrates one logical r-formula which may be linked to I woke up this morning to form a perfectly acceptable blues line.

Indeed, the formula I woke up this morning is open to many different kinds of r-formula links (see Appendix B); since it seems to put few restrictions on the type of action or situation which can be described in the r-formula. The choice, however, is not completely unlimited. Note the following hypothetical line:

4. *I woke up this morning; I lay down to take my rest²

The two actions in the above formulas seem to be out of sequence. Certainly, waking up conflicts with lying down, when juxtaposed in this way, and the illogical nature of such an assertion would probably prevent it from appearing in the blues.

Other formulas are much more restrictive as to the kinds of juxtapositions they may undergo. Take, for example, the formula whose surface manifestation is usually I ain't going to marry. This x-formula presents a very specific image and the r-formula to which it is linked must, in some way, relate to the image of marriage, or, at least, modify and agree with the statement already asserted in the x-formula. For this reason, we do not find this formula linked with the r-formula in example 1a.

5. *I ain't going to marry; I had the blues three different ways

In every case in the corpus under analysis, this manifestation of the x-formula is linked with the following r-formula:

² The r-formula in this line occurs in ALET-16 and STOK-15.

- 6 I ain't going to marry; ain't going to settle down

(SMIB-11)³

The same formula with the attached embedding element want to is linked with another r-formula:

- 7 I don't want to marry; just want to be your man (PATI-4)⁴

In examples 6 and 7, the linked r-formulas collocate with the idea of marriage: settle down in example 6, and be your man in example 7. The lines are both logical and meaningful in the context of blues lyrics.

The following examples, although they do not occur in the corpus under analysis, would probably also be acceptable to the singer and his audience:

- 8 ?I ain't going to marry; I'm going to leave your town⁵

- 9 ?I ain't going to marry; I ain't going to be your dog

- 10 ?I ain't going to marry, until this time another year

- 11 ?I ain't going to marry with that no-good gal of mine

The r-formulas in these examples all occur in the blues, attached to other x-formulas. Their hypothetical acceptability is based on the overall logic of the lines which they form.

Some formulas are severely restrictive because their images are only a part of an accepted idiomatic expression or proverb. Thus, the x-formula a nickel is a nickel is part of a proverb expressed as a complete line in the blues:

- 12 A nickel is a nickel; a dime is a dime

(HAWK-6)⁶

³ The same line occurs in BAIK-2, DAVIC-1, HILB-1, JEFB-9, JOHJA-1, LOFW-3, MARTS-1, and UNKA-1.

⁴ The same line occurs in WILLJ-8.

⁵ The question mark (?) denotes a construction which is hypothetically acceptable in the blues.

⁶ The same line occurs in HILK-5 (twice), WASBS-19, HILB-2, and WILLJ-4.

Because of the strong proverbial link between these two formulas, it is not likely that either the formula a nickel is a nickel or the formula a dime is a dime would occur in any context other than that of example 12.

But there are means by which two disparate thoughts may be linked to form a logical and meaningful line. In most of the examples given above, the formulas are linked in a very simple fashion: two independent predications which follow in a sequence from x- to r-formula without any overt syntactical relationship between them. In other words, the two formulas appear as two independent sentences. Note, once again, example 1:

- 1 I woke up this morning; I had the blues three different ways
(THOR-13)

This, however, is by no means the only way in which two formulas may be linked. As in regular language usage, two formulaic predications may be linked in various logical relationships.

The insertion of a conjunction between two formulas establishes certain logical links between the predications which may alter, considerably, the overall meaning of the line. Note how the formula human be satisfied is used in the following two examples:

- 13 He is a rambler, he is a rambler, and he is never satisfied
(BOGL-20)
- 14 I did not have the blues, but little mama just wasn't satisfied
(COLFB-1)

In example 13, two statements are made about a man, both of which are independent of each other; though it may be assumed that dissatisfaction and rambling are two symptoms of some deeper trouble. The logical link between the two assertions in example 13 is symmetrical, and neither statement is dependent upon the other for truth-value.⁷

⁷ It is not the purpose of this study to explore the highly complex

The same cannot be said of the use of this formula in example 14. The insertion of the conjunction but before the formula (1) wasn't satisfied makes this predication logically dependent upon the x-formula, I did not have the blues. The but in this line denies the logical expectation that the lack of blues leads to satisfaction; if the conjunction were symmetric, the sense of the line would be very much strained:

15 *I did not have the blues, and I wasn't satisfied

In normal blues contexts, such a statement would be contradictory, absurd, and illogical if left unexplained. The insertion of the word but between the two formulas makes clear the meaning of the line, which might be paraphrased as "Even though I didn't have the blues, and thus one would expect that I would be satisfied, I was, in fact, not satisfied despite my lack of blues."

Other logical relationships are also possible between two formulas. Note the following two examples:

16 I lose all my clothes baby; believe I'm going to lose my mind
(WALKA-1)

17 You will either run me crazy, or I will lose my mind
(JOHLO-3)

In example 16, the formula I will lose my mind neither denies nor confirms the truth of the x-formula. In example 17, however, the insertion of the conjunction or establishes a logical relationship wherein, if the x-formula is true, then the r-formula is false, and vice versa.

subject of the logical properties of conjunction, or other sentence connectives, beyond what is necessary for the description of formula-juxtaposition. For a detailed examination of conjunction, see Robin Lakoff, "If's, And's and But's About Conjunction," in *Studies in Linguistic Semantics*, ed. Charles J. Fillmore and D. Terrence Langendoen (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1971), pp. 114-49.

The relationship of causality is also common between two formulas: the x-formula will result, if the r-formula is true:

- 18 Now I'm leaving town baby, because you know you treated me wrong
(MONTE-8)

In another type of logical relationship, the two formulas are placed within an "if . . . then" equation:

- 19 Then if you love me now woman, then you won't do nothing wrong
(FULB-16)

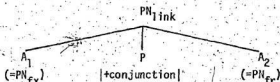
Further logical relationships between two formulas involve a time factor; the truth of one assertion being dependent upon the prior establishment of the truth of the other assertion. Note the way the following formulas are linked:

- 20 How mama when I die, I want you to bury me deep (BLAAL-3)
21 Remember me, after the days I'm gone (JOHLO-1)
22 I'm going to roam this highway, until the day I die
(GILL-8)
23 The first shot I fired, then the man fell dead (McTW-32)
24 So you well as to give me some of your loving, before you pass
away (BIGB-13)
25 I stood there laughing over him, while he wobbled around and died
(SMIB-25)

In all the above lines, a formula which asserts the death of some person is prefaced by a conjunction which places that death in a temporal relationship with some other assertion. In example 24, the action of the x-formula occurs prior to that of the "death" formula; in example 25, both actions occur at the same time; in example 20, the action of the "death" formula occurs before that of the r-formula. Other time conjunctions which are found in the blues are during and as soon as.

The logical relationships expressed by all these conjunctions may be represented semantically in the following manner: the x-formula (PN_{FX})

and the r-formula (PN_{fr}) are both embedded within a linking predication (PN_{link}), such that the two arguments of the linking predication equal the two formulas of the line:



The semantic feature +conjunction in the predicate of the PN_{link} may generate and, but, or, because, if . . . then, when, after, until, then, before, while, during, or as soon as, depending upon the type of logical relationship the singer wishes to establish between the two formulas in the blues line.

One final way in which two formulas may be linked is through the downgrading of one formula within the structure of the other. We have already seen, in the preceding chapter, that one formula may act as an adverbial modifier to another:

26 I got up this morning just about the break of day (COLLS-14)

This is an example of semantic downgrading as a way of linking two formulas. Time adverbials which are r-formulas usually link to x-formulas in this manner. When the time adverbial appears as an x-formula, however, the blues singer may choose between separating the formulas into two distinct sentences, or embedding the r-formula within the x-formula adverbial phrase:

27 It was soon this morning; I heard my doorbell ring (HARZ-4)

28 Early this morning, you wanted to fight (NATE-10)

Not only time adverbial formulas act in this manner. In Chapter XII, the formula my face is full of frowns was shown in two different surface manifestations.

- 29 Well poor Joe leaving this morning; my face is full of frowns
(WILLJ-9)

- 30 I was way down in Sunflower with my face all full of frowns
(PATT-20)

In example 29, the formula is an independent sentence, whereas in example 30, it is linked to the x-formula as a prepositional phrase.

Further examples of this type of linkage are characterized by the words who, that, which, and where, which subordinate one formula to another. Note the following paired examples:

- 31a Now if it's starting a-raining, I'm going to drive my blues away
(JOHR-17)

- 31b I'm going to get someone, who can drive my blues away
(BARE-4)

- 32a Well I tried to love a sweet mama, but she couldn't understand
(JOHL-7)

- 32b I say you got a sweet woman, man which you just don't understand
(JOHL-8)

- 33a You want your ashes hauled, you want your ashes hauled, and
ain't got no man, ain't got no man (ARNK-13)

- 33b I am looking for a woman that ain't got no man (SHAD-16)

- 34a I started blowing my gauge, and I was having my fun
(GREL-5)

- 34b I'm going to Florida, where I can have my fun (THPE-2)

All of these formulaic linkages represent a superstructure into which formulas are fitted by the singer. The superstructure is a logical equation and the formulas are the assertions within this equation. The varied equations which are available to the singer open up further choices to him, and give the blues lyric further flexibility. By the insertion of and, but, because, if . . . then, or some other conjunction between two formulas, or by the subordination of one formula to another, the singer is able to change the equation of the blues line and thus change the

logical juxtaposition of the formulas.

Obviously, not all formulas will fit all of the possible equations.

The two formulas in example 1 might be placed in the following equations:

- 35 ?I woke up this morning, and I had the blues three different ways
- 36 ?When I woke up this morning, I had the blues three different ways
- 37 ?I woke up this morning with the blues three different ways

but the same two formulas do not permit the logical and meaningful use of the following equations:

- 38 *I woke up this morning, or I had the blues three different ways
- 39 *I woke up this morning, until I had the blues three different ways
- 40 *I woke up this morning, which had the blues three different ways

Note that example 39 becomes logical if the assertions are reversed in the equation:

- 41 ?Until I woke up this morning, I had the blues three different ways

Once the singer places the two formulas within an equation, he again has certain options. As stated earlier, argument and predicate agreement is often necessary when two formulas are linked. This agreement, however, may lead to redundancy in the line, especially if the A_1 arguments of the two linked formulas refer to the same persona. Note the following example:

- 42 I woke up this morning; I couldn't even get out of my door
(ARNK-23)

The two I's in this line refer to the same persona, and are in a sense redundant. This being the case, a deletion transformation is possible, which will eliminate the repetition of the I. This deletion transformation has taken place in the following example:

- 43 I woke up this morning; couldn't even get out my door
(JOHLO-30)

This deletion of arguments in two linked formulas is almost always

optional, and whether the singer chooses deletion or not depends upon his sense of style and upon the metric demands of the tune he has chosen. In a fast-paced blues, the singer might take advantage of every possible deletion in order to fit the lines to the tune; in a slow-paced blues, the singer might include as many redundant features as possible to elongate the blues line.

Predicates may also be deleted if they are synonymous. Note the following line:

- 44 Some one of these days she going to love me too (THPE-1)

The underlined formula is one manifestation of +human love +human too.

If the same formula is preceded by another formula which has as its predicate the feature +love, the r-formula predicate may be deleted:

- 45 I believe trying to love me Black Minnie, and my partner too
(McCL-14)

The underlined formula in example 45 may be represented, at a deeper syntactic level, as you are trying to love my partner too, but deletion transformations have eliminated the predicates are trying to love from the surface structure of the phrase. Again, such deletion is optional, and the singer could just as easily have included the redundant predicate:

- 46 You can't love me baby, and love my brother too (HICR-18)

It should be noted that some of the examples given above are hypothetical and do not occur in the corpus under analysis. Again, this points to the difference between blues competence and blues performance. According to blues competence, there is no reason why such lines cannot occur. Indeed, if blues performance were identical with blues competence, the combinations and permutations of logical and acceptable blues lines would be almost infinite. The singer, of necessity, can only make a

limited selection from this infinite corpus of possible lines.

LINES INTO STANZAS

The options which the singer has in juxtaposing two formulas are dependent very much upon semantic and syntactic rules. His lines have to follow the rules which govern compound and complex sentence formation within his language, since a blues line is usually a sentence. In fitting two lines together to form a blues stanza, however, different considerations apply.

As noted before, the blues couplet exhibits no enjambment from one line to the next, which means that every line contains at least one complete thought. The two thoughts or complex assertions which make up the blues couplet are much more independent of each other, in grammatical terms, than are the two simpler thoughts which usually make up the blues line. The varied choice of conjunction and subordination open to the singer in linking two formulas is severely limited when two lines are juxtaposed. Indeed, in the great majority of cases, there is no grammatical link at all between one line and another in the blues couplet.

Where such a link does exist, however, it usually involves the conjunction and, rather than links in more complex logical equations:

- 47 Now I never felt so sorry, till the people walked down the lane
And my heart struck sorrow, when they called my good gal's name
 (CARRL-34)

A conjunction which involves a slightly more complex logical equation, but, may also on rare occasions attach one line to another:

- 48 I regarded you like I were your baby child
But when it comes to find out you was misusing me all the while
 (DARB-2)

These grammatically linked lines, however, compose such a small percentage of all the blues couplets, that even citing them gives them more importance than they deserve. Neither syntax nor semantics will explain the juxtaposition of one line with another. The most important link between the two lines of a couplet is rhyme. As stated earlier, rhyme is one of the major textural features of blues lyrics, and it is the singer's first consideration in linking two lines to form a couplet.

The nature of blues rhyme is complex; indeed, a detailed investigation of blues rhyme lies beyond the scope of this study. I have previously written on this subject in relation to the blues of Willie McTell,⁸ and will briefly summarize my conclusions. The blues singer has a hierarchical concept of rhyme, wherein some rhymes are more acceptable than others. I base this concept of acceptability upon the frequency of types of rhymes within McTell's repertoire.

The most acceptable type of rhyme is one in which the final vowel and consonant sounds of the two words to be rhymed are identical. This "level 1" rhyme is similar to standard masculine rhyme as it is used in most poetry in the English language. Blues singers may also, however, rhyme words which do not conform to "level 1" specifications. Different singers have different concepts of "level 2" rhymes; that is, some make distinctions which others do not. In general, however, three "level 2" rules may be postulated:

1. Two words rhyme at level 2 if their vowel sounds are identical and their final consonant sounds include complete oral closure.
2. Two words rhyme at level 2 if their vowel sounds are identical and their final consonant sounds involve complete oral closure plus nasality.

⁸ Michael Taft, "Willie McTell's Rules of Rhyme: A Brief Excursion Into Blues Phonetics," Southern Folklore Quarterly, forthcoming.

- 3 Two words rhyme at level 2 if their vowel sounds are identical and one word has incomplete oral closure as its final sound, while the other word has any final sound.

There is a third "level" of rhyme, the least acceptable, in which the final vowel sound of the two rhyme-words vary. For the purposes of this study, however, it is not so important to know the nature of blues rhyme as it is to realize that rhyme is one of the major links between two lines in a couplet. Just as the juxtaposition of two formulas in a line is dependent upon semantic and syntactic considerations, the linkage of two lines in a couplet is dependent upon phonological considerations.

These considerations limit the blues singer's compositional flexibility more than any other feature of the lyric. As noted earlier, the r-formula is less variable, syntactically, than the x-formula, because of the necessity of keeping the rhyme-word at the end of the line. Furthermore, the choice of the second r-formula in a couplet becomes severely reduced, once the rhyme has been established by the first r-formula. For example, if the singer has chosen the following first line,

- 49 Lord I woke up this morning; blues all around my bed
(JOHLS-2)

he must complete the couplet with another line which rhymes with bed:

- 50 I never had no good man, I mean to ease my worried head
(JOHLS-2)
- 51 Well I had a high fever going up to my head (BARN-2)
- 52 I couldn't help but to think about what my good gal said
(BRAC-9)
- 53 Thinking about the kind words that my mama said. (BUTLS-2)
- 54 Thinking about that wire that my brown had sent (BUTLS-3)
- 55 I turned back to my *chivyer*; blues all in my bed.
(ESTE-10)

- 56 Went in to eat my breakfast, and the blues all in my bread (JEFB-1)
 57 Had the blues so bad mama, till I couldn't raise up my head (JOHTO-1)
 58 I didn't have my daddy to hold my aching head (JONAN-1)
 59 And the ??? running everywhere (STEV-1)
 60 And the blues they tell me, crying man oh man (STEV-5)
 61 And the blues ain't here; they easing everywhere (STEV-6)
 62 I turned my face to the wall; baby these are the words I said (STOK-2)

In the above examples, the first lines of the couplets were all the same as in example 49 (not counting extraformulaic elements), and, as shown, the second line, though it may vary in the formulas which it contains, must end with an appropriate rhyme-word. In examples 59, 60, and 61, Vol Stevens stretches the limits of choice by using level 2 (everywhere) and level-3 (man) rhymes, as did Butler in example 54 (sent), but these lines still fall within the boundaries of acceptable line-juxtaposition. Within the blues corpus, however, there are many different lines which would be perfectly acceptable from a logical or thematic point of view, but which cannot be used in conjunction with example 49. In the following example, the first line is thematically close to that of example 49, but its different rhyme-word requires a different set of linked lines:

- 63 I woke up this morning; those blues were on my mind
 I was so down-hearted, I couldn't do nothing but cry (KYLE-1)

The second line of this couplet would fit well, thematically, with example 49, but it is unacceptable simply because of its rhyme.

Thematic considerations, if secondary to those of rhyme, are still quite important; indeed, theme is the other major factor of line-juxta-

position. The rules of thematic relationships between lines are not nearly as clear-cut as the rules of rhyme. Abbe Niles was probably the first to discuss the thematic link between the lines of a blues stanza, in his description of the A²A-type stanza:

There might be and usually was one repetition of the first line of the stanza, but instead the second line might slightly modify, by way of emphasis, the first, while the third would introduce something new: lines one and two having expressed, say, some grief, wistful reflection, or some unhopeful 'if,' line three would now supply a reason for the grief, some collateral conclusion, or the course which would be taken should the 'if' come true; the third thus became the important line, releasing the tension accumulated during the repetition of the first . . .⁹

No one else has stated so clearly and so eloquently the thematic relationship of one line to another; but it is difficult, if not impossible, to determine what is an acceptable as opposed to an unacceptable thematic linkage.

Certainly, the second line of a blues couplet releases the tension of the stanza. This, however, may well be a function of the position of the line in the stanza, more than its thematic content; after one or more repetitions of the first line, which very effectively builds up an anticipation and tension within the stanza, any second line might naturally release that tension, regardless of its thematic content. It is also true that the second line often "answers" the thought in the first line, but many instances can be found in which the second line is quite independent of the first in this respect.

Examples 49 to 62 illustrate some of the difficulties in establishing thematic rules. Couplet 50 seems to answer the assertion made in example 49:

⁹ "Introduction," in Blues: An Anthology, by W. C. Handy (New York: Albert & Charles Boni, 1926), p. 2.

64 Lord I woke up this morning; blues all around my bed.
 I never had no good man, I mean to ease my worried head.
 (JOHLS-2)

We may see the second line as an answer to the question, "Why did she wake up in the morning with the blues all around her bed?" But the assumption that the second line answers, or even refers to the first line, is based totally on their juxtaposition. There is no inherent reason why the second line should be an answer to the first. There is nothing in the internal structure, either semantic or syntactic, which makes the second line an answer to the first. The two lines could as easily be two separate and unrelated assertions by the singer. It is the position of the lines which determines their thematic relationship, rather than being the thematic relationship which determines their position. If the positions of the lines in example 64 are reversed, an appropriate and logical stanza also results:

65 ?I never had no good man, I mean to ease my worried head.
 Lord I woke up this morning; blues all around my bed

In hypothetical example 65, the result of the "grief" of the first line is given: "Not having a good man to ease my worried head caused the blues to be all around my bed when I woke up this morning."

That such a stanza as example 65 does not occur in the blues is partly due to the nature of the formula I woke up this morning. This formula will be discussed in more detail later, but suffice it to say that it is an action initiator; it alerts the listener to a new situation. It is possible, therefore, that some rule of chronological sequence can be formulated in relation to the two lines in a couplet. Certainly, example 56 shows some sort of sequential relationship: one must wake up before one can have breakfast.

But many couplets exhibit no such chronological relationship. Note the following example:

- 66 My heart's in trouble; mind's in misery
Got the blues so bad; I really can't hardly see (DAYW-2)

This is a non-chronological list of troubles which presupposes no set sequence. The lack of chronological sequence of some couplets is best illustrated by their ability to reverse their order in the blues. For example, within the same song, the following two couplets occur:

- 67 Lord I tell you, it wasn't no need of mama trying to be so kind
Ah you know you don't love me; you ain't got me on your mind

Mmmm you ain't got me on your mind
And it's what is the need of baby trying to be so kind
(AKER-4)

It would seem that there is no universal rule of chronological juxtaposition which can be formulated for blues lines. Again, the very position of the lines tends to give a certain sense of chronological or sequential order to the two lines of a couplet, which is not inherent in the lines themselves. There are, however, certain differences in the surface manifestations between the first and second line which contribute to a sense of sequence. Often, the first line in a couplet is in the past tense, whereas the second line is in the present tense:

- 68 I told the judge, I ain't been here before
If you give me light sentence, I won't come here no more
(HOWE-8)

or the first line is in the present tense and the second is in the future tense:

- 69 Oh you got to stop balking, and raising the deuce
I'll grab you mama, and turn you every way but loose
(McTW-15)

or the couplet may go from present to past in a reverse chronological sequence:

- 70 I got a mind, never work no more
I've been badly treated; I've been drove from door to door
(MARTC-2)

It is this switch in tense from one line to the next which gives the couplet a sense of chronological order. The actual content or semantic structure of the formulas and lines involved has much less to do with this sense of sequence. If however, the content of the individual lines does not determine chronological order, does the content determine which lines may logically be linked into a meaningful stanza? The test of this hypothesis is to find two lines which cannot be linked because of their conflicting logical statements.

For example, can the following two lines be joined into a couplet?

- 71 You know I love you, and cannot let you be (SMIBM-2)
72 So the fish and the whales make a fuss over me (THOH-8)

The result is not too promising:

- 73 ?You know I love you, and cannot let you be
So the fish and the whales make a fuss over me

If, however, the surface structures of the two lines are slightly altered, in terms of extraformulaic elements and verb tense, a logical and meaningful couplet might be formed:

- 74 ?You know I love you and cannot let you be
Maybe the fish and the whales will make a fuss over me

The second line of hypothetical example 74 answers the first line by stating, "Though I love you and that love may not be reciprocal, I might, in turn, be loved by someone else; perhaps the fish and whales." The second line is, to use Niles' terminology, a collateral conclusion, and thus the couplet is meaningful and logical.

Indeed, it is difficult to find two lines which cannot be made to fit together logically, given the flexibility of blues structure. Even

non-chronological juxtapositions, such as the reversal of examples 56 and 49, might be made logical with the proper alterations:

75 *Went to eat my breakfast, and the blues all in my bread
Lord I woke up this morning; blues all around my bed

76 ?If I go in to eat my breakfast, and the blues are all in my bread
Then you know I woke up this morning with the blues all around
my bed

Even if virtually any two lines can be made into an acceptable couplet (given the same rhyme ending), the probabilities are that certain line-pairs will occur with great frequency in the blues, while other possible pairs will not occur at all. Formulas and lines often develop into a loose association with a small group of other formulas and lines. Given any one member of this rather amorphous group, the chances are that the singer will choose to link it with other members of the same group. With-in the range of possibilities in formula and line-juxtaposition, then, there is a more limited and acceptable range of probabilities. Again, we see that blues performance is a small sub-set of blues competence.

Of course, the range of probabilities for some lines seems endless. The line I woke up this morning at the break of day is used with a wide assortment of different second lines; as a general action-initiator, it allows a great many actions or assertions to be described in its juxtaposed line. But a definite "family" of lines and formulas tends to centre around such lines as the following example:

77 Oh tell me baby, where did you stay last night (BURS-4)

The couplets in which the essence of this line are to be found include the following:

78 Oh tell me baby, where did you stay last night
For you come in this morning; sun was shining bright
(BURS-4)

- 79 Tell me pretty mama, where did you stay last night
It ain't none of your business, daddy (since I treat you right
(BLAK-1)
- 80 Hey tell me woman, where did you stay last night
For your shoes unfastened, and your skirt don't fit you right
(DICKT-3)
- 81 Tell me pretty mama, where'd you stay last night
Shoes ain't buttoned, and you don't smell right (DORST-10)
- 82 Oh Black Mattie, where did you stay last night
With your hair all tangled; clothes ain't fitting you right
(ESTE-4)
- 83 Vernita, baby where did you stay last night
Now you come home this morning, and your clothes ain't fitting
you right (ESTE-19)
- 84 Yeah mean mama, where did you stay last night
Oh your hair all wrinkled, and your clothes ain't fitting you
right (HARW-1)
- 85 Tell me brownskin mama, where did you stay last night
With your hair all down; your face is never washed
(HAWK-4)
- 86 Please tell me pretty mama, honey where you stayed last night
You didn't come home, till the sun was shining bright
(HICR-5)
- 87 Said fair brown, where did you stay last night
You hair's all down, and you know you ain't talking right
(JEFB-10)
- 88 Ohhhh, baby where did you stay last night
You got your hair all tangled, and you ain't talking right
(JOHR-11)
- 89 Hey hey, baby where did you stay last night
You didn't come home, till the sun was shining bright
(JOHR-11)
- 90 Mam what's the matter rider; where did you stay last night
Hair all down baby, and you don't treat me right (JOHTO-8)
- 91 Now look a-here mama, tell me where did you stay last night
She said ain't none of your business; you know you don't treat
me right (McCL-6)
- 92 Now look a-here mama; you stay last night
Said ain't none of your business; you don't do me right
(McCL-16)

- 93 Now tell me Mary, where did you stay last night
Come home this morning; the sun was shining bright
(McCOJ-6)
- 94 Can't you tell me pretty papa, where did you stay last night
He said it's none of your business, mama so I treat you right
(MOOR-1)
- 95 Tell me fair brownie, where did you stay last night
You hair's all down, and your clothes ain't fitting you right
(MOOW-2)
- 96 Now tell me little black gal, where did you stay last night
Just the reason I ask you black gal; you know your clothes ain't
right (PICK-1)
- 97 Hey mama mama, where you stay last night
You hair's all wrinkled, that they beating you right
(SHAD-5)
- 98 Lordy it's sweet to mama; now mama where you stay last night
Because your clothes all wrinkled, mama and your hair sure ain't
fixed up right (STOK-8)
- 99 Corrina Corrina, where'd you stay last night
Come in this morning; the sun was shining bright (WIGG-4)
- 100 Tell me baby, baby where did you stay last night
Now with your hair all tangled, and your clothes ain't fitting
you right (WILLS-15)
- 101 Well I asked you woman, where did you stay last night
You said it wasn't none of my business, just since you treating
me right (WILLS-39)

Judging by these examples, three "answers" to the question where did you stay last night are probable: "you are in a dishevelled condition as to your hair, clothes, or deportment" (80, 81, 82, 84, 85, 87, 88, 95, 96, 98, 100); "you did not come home until a very late hour" (78, 83, 86, 89, 93, 99); "you have no right to ask me such a question, since you are well-treated by me, or I am ill-treated by you" (79, 91, 92, 94, 101). Example 90 is a combination of two of the answers, and example 97 seems also to be some curious combination of the "dishevelment" and "mistreatment" motifs.

Despite the almost endless possibilities, given the line Tell me mama, where did you stay last night, the singers followed one of three types of answers; however, the first line, as well as the three probable answers, may all vary to some extent in the formulas they contain:

102a(90) Mmm what's the matter rider; where did you stay last night
(JOHTO-8)

102b(91) Now look a-here mama, tell me where you stay last night.
(McCL-6)

103a(84) Oh your hair all wrinkled, and your clothes ain't fitting
you right (HARM-1)

103b(87) You hair all down, and you know you ain't talking right
(JEFB-10)

This group of lines and the many formulas within them constitute a family of images and themes. This family, however, is not a very cohesive and self-contained unit. Many of the individual formulas which make up this family are also found in entirely different stanzaic contexts. The formula tell me mama is one of the most frequent in the blues (see Appendix A) and owes no special allegiance to one or another family. Note its use in the following couplet:

104 Tell me mama, what's the matter now
Trying to quit your daddy Lord, and you don't know how
(BRAC-5)

Another manifestation of the formula where did you stay last night also occurs in a different stanzaic context:

105 I work all day; I wrestle all night
I did not think my baby would go out and stay all night
(GILL-6)

In the second line, the formula your hair all wrinkled acts in the same way:

106 Your hair all wrinkled; you full of sweat
Your underskirt is wringing wet. (DAVIL-13)

and the formula you don't treat me right has many different stanzaic contexts:

- 107 I dump sugar all day; clean until broad daylight
I done everything for that woman; still she don't treat me right (BLAAB-1)

There are some formulas within the family which are found in no other contexts in the corpus under analysis. The formula when the sun/moon was shining bright is found only in conjunction with the r-formula where did you stay last night in the first line of the couplet. There is no reason, however, given the structure of blues lyrics, that such a phrase could not be fitted into another stanzaic context. The following hypothetical couplet seems perfectly acceptable as a blues stanza:

- 108 ?Now all you do is love to fuss and fight
You walk the streets, till the sun shines bright

Because of the flexibility of blues structure, there is always the potential of new combinations of formulas and lines, but this potential is not, in every case, explored by the blues singer.

That a number of formulas and lines always seem to be associated with each other, and never appear in other potentially acceptable contexts, has led to the belief that lines or even whole stanzas may be formulas in themselves. Earlier, this concept of the "verse formula" was shown to be an unproductive way of approaching the structure of the blues (pp. 226-27). Although it is true, for example, that the x-formula, a nickel is a nickel always appears with the r-formula a dime is a dime, and that together they form a proverbial phrase, there is always the potential of adjoining this x-formula to some other r-formula. This potential is found in the compositional competence of the blues, and not, perhaps, in its compositional performance. One may say that, in blues performance, the two formulas have "ossified" into an indivisible line.

John Barnie has discussed this process of ossification, wherein lines and stanzas become indivisible units in the minds of blues singers, but, as he himself realizes, there is always the potential for change.¹⁰ To illustrate that ossification is never absolute or irrevocable, note the following line:

109 Ashes to ashes; dust to dust (SMIC-19)

This line, like a nickel is a nickel; a dime is a dime, is proverbial in nature. Its source is liturgical,¹¹ which would seem to make the two half-lines particularly inseparable. There exists, however, another combination of formulas which means the same as ashes to ashes; dust to dust, but which allows another rhyme:

110 Ashes to ashes, and sand to sand (McTW-30)

Thus, even a proverbial, liturgical line may undergo formula variation.

Supposedly ossified couplets may also be altered. For example, the following couplet is a strong unified image, which has a specific meaning to anyone in a "rabbit-hunting" culture:

111 Blues jumped a rabbit; run him one solid mile
This rabbit sat down; cried like a natural child (JEFB-16)

There are, however, several variations on this same theme, all involving the substitution of other formulas and lines for those in example 111:

112 Lord said blues jumped a rabbit; run him for a solid mile
Lord that fool couldn't catch him, and he fall right down
and-cried (RACH-4)

¹⁰ "I Feel Like Jumping Through the Keyhole in Your Door: Formulaic Lines and Stanzas in the Country Blues," unpublished typescript, 1976 (submitted to Ethnomusicology).

¹¹ See "The Order for the Burial of the Dead," in The Book of Common Prayer . . . (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, n.d.).

- 113 Blues jumped the monkey and run him for a solid mile
And the poor fellow lie down; cried like a natural child
(McCOJ-24)
- 114 Hey my doggie jumped a rabbit and he run him for a solid mile
When he seen he couldn't catch him, so he cried just like a
natural child (JORG-8)
- 115 My dog got the rabbit; the rabbit fell down on his knees
He looked up at the dog; he say won't you have mercy on me please
(JOHLY-2)

STANZAS INTO SONGS

The juxtapositions of formulas and lines may be seen on a continuum from what is possible to what is probable to what is frequently employed. The potential of new and original combinations is ever present in the blues, being a part of the great structural flexibility of the lyric. But even greater flexibility occurs in the linking of stanzas to form a blues song. The juxtaposition of one stanza with the next depends upon neither semantic, syntactic, nor phonological rules. Indeed, even theme and logic seem to play a minor part in the linking of stanzas.

It has already been stated that the blues song is a non-narrative lyric, that it is emotive rather than descriptive, and that its stanzas follow no chronological sequence. Although this is true for the great majority of blues songs, there are lyrics which do follow a narrative or thematic pattern. Again, there is a continuum upon which blues songs lie: from well-ordered narrative lyrics, to thematically consistent songs, to seemingly random selections of unrelated stanzas.

True narrative songs are relatively rare in the blues, but they do exist. Some of the more common blues of this type describe floods and other natural disasters--the "Back Water Blues" variants, for example.

Songs which revolve around the central topic of the blues, namely love, and which are also narrative in nature are rarer still. One of the best examples of this type of love-narrative blues is the "Death Letter Blues," which was recorded in many variants throughout the race record era:

- 116 I received a letter that my man was dying
 I caught the first train and went back home a-flying
 He wasn't dead, but he was slowly dying
 And just to think of him, I just can't keep from crying
 I followed my daddy to the burying ground
 I watched the pallbearers slowly let him down
 That was the last time I saw my daddy's face
 Mama loves you sweet papa, but I just can't take your place
 (SMIC-33)

This song follows a set chronology which would be difficult to disturb. Thus, in the case of this blues, the relationship between the stanzas is obvious.¹²

In most blues songs, however, the reason for the juxtaposition of their stanzas is not so easily ascertained. A chronological sequence is rare; stanzas may be placed in almost any order without doing harm to the "logic" of the song. Closest to narratives on this continuum are those blues in which each stanza concentrates upon one particular and very specific theme, each stanza of the song thus being one variation on this specific theme. The theme must be more specific than simply "love," since the blues is, in general, a love lyric. One such song is Son House's "Dry Spell Blues" (Parts 1 and 2), in which House concentrates

¹² Interestingly, neither the "Death Letter" blues ballads nor the "Back Water" blues ballads are recognized as true narrative songs by Malcolm Laws, and neither of these songs, nor the white song, "Letter Edged in Black," from which the "Death Letter Blues" may have been derived, are found in his book, G. Malcolm Laws, Jr., Native American Balladry: A Descriptive and a Bibliographical Syllabus, rev. ed., Bibliographic and Special Series, No. 1 (Philadelphia: American Folklore Society, 1964).

on the themes of drought and poverty from one stanza to the next:

117 The dry spell blues have fallen; drive me from door to door
The dry spell blues have put everybody on the killing floor

Now the people down South sure won't have no home
Because the dry spell have parched all this cotton and corn

Hard luck's on everybody, and many people are blue
Now besides the shower, ain't got no help for you

Lord I fold my arms, and I walked away
Just like I tell you, somebody's got to pay

Pork chops forty-five cents a pound; cotton is only ten.
I can't keep no woman, no no nowhere I been

So dry, old boll weevil turned up his toes and died
Now ain't nothing to do, bootleg moonshine and rye (HOUS-5)

I done throwed up my hands, Lord and solemnly swore
There ain't no need of me changing towns; it's a drought every-
where I go

It's a dry old spell, everywhere I been
I believe to my soul, this world is about to end

Well I stood in my backyard; wrung my hands and screamed
And I couldn't see nothing; couldn't see nothing green

Oh Lord have mercy if you please
Let your rain come down, and give our poor hearts ease

These blues these blues is worthwhile to be heard
For it's very likely bound to rain somewhere (HOUS-6)

Few songs adhere to a single theme as closely as does the above.

But for all its thematic consistency, the individual stanzas seem to have no special order. If one were to take all the stanzas in this song and rearrange them in some random way, the logic of the song would not be damaged. Though all of the stanzas of the song are linked thematically, no sequential link is discernible.

Songs which are concerned with the theme of love--the vast majority of blues songs--are similar to House's song in respect to the juxtaposition of their stanzas. The theme is constant, but the stanzas which

express the theme follow no particular sequence. But the love-lyrics seem to be even more non-sequential in nature because, within this broad theme, the singer rarely isolates one particular aspect of love upon which to concentrate. Note the following song:

- 118.1 I've got your picture, and I'm going to put it in a frame
And then if you leave town, we can find you just the same
- 2 Now if you don't love me, please don't dog me around
If you dog me around, I know you put me down
- 3 I know my baby thinks the world and all of me
Every time she smiles, she shines her light on me
- 4 Oh I said fair brown, something's going on wrong
This here woman I love, she's done been here and gone
- 5 Oh listen fair brown, don't you want to go
Going to take you across the water, where that brownskin man can't go
- 6 Lord I'm worried here; worried everywhere
Now I just started home, and I'll not be worried there
- 7 Lord I'm tired of being married; tired of this settling down
I only want to stay like I am, and slip from town to town
(JEFB-14)

If one analyzes this song, stanza by stanza, a great many seemingly unconnected themes and sentiments emerge: stanza 1 implies mistrust of a loved-one; stanza 2 implies that the persona is being toyed with; stanza 3 brags of the woman's love for the persona; stanza 4 implies an abandoned lover; stanza 5 is a seduction; stanza 6 speaks of some unnamed anxiety and homesickness; and stanza 7 disparages married life. The song is a mixture of different emotional states, different attitudes towards love, and different kinds of love relationships. As with House's blues, the stanzas can be repositioned without doing any seeming damage to the lyric.

The non-chronological and non-sequential nature of most blues lyrics does not, however, mean that blues songs grow out of confused minds or

some jumble or unrelated images in the brains of blues singers. Even if the blues song follows no narrative sequence, there is usually a narrative of sorts implicit in the lyric. This "narrative" may be no more specific than "the lover abandoned," or "domestic troubles between husband and wife," but the blues singer, instead of relating the event, expresses his feelings about the event. Different aspects of this implicit narrative give rise to different emotions, dreams, and imaginary scenes. The singer is free to express these perceptions from the mind's eye in any sequence he chooses. In effect, the singer begins his song with some implicit narrative, and makes free associations about this event from stanza to stanza.

Thus, it might be impossible to devise rules of sequence, or even rules of theme, for the ordering of stanzas in a blues song; for any one rule devised, there will probably be more exceptions than examples. Blaustein is perhaps the only blues scholar who has attempted to find sequential rules in blues stanzas, in his analysis of Willie McTell's "Statesboro Blues."¹³ But his Levi-Straussian approach has not been tested beyond this one song, and it remains to be seen whether "Statesboro Blues" is typical or anomalous in respect to its stanza ordering.

It is probably more profitable to explore the ways in which two or three stanzas within a song interact, for there is often a short-term logical consistency within portions of blues lyrics. The following three consecutive stanzas from the middle of a song hold together thematically and even have the makings of a small narrative:

¹³Richard Blaustein, "The Curative Function of the Blues: A Structural Analysis," read at the Annual Meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 14 Nov. 1971.

119. Ticket agent ticket agent, which a-way has my woman gone
Say describe your woman, and I'll tell you what road she's on

She's a long tail mama, five and a half from the ground
She's a tailor-made mama, and she ain't no hand-me-down

Mama if you ride the Southern, I'll ride the Santa Fe
When you get in Memphis, pretty mama look around for me
(McTW-33)

It sometimes seems that one stanza follows another in the blues because the image in the first stanza triggers a similar image in the second, in a free-association manner. The following example seems to be one such case:

120.1 Let me tell you mama, like the Dago told the Jew
If you don't like me, it's a cinch I don't like you

2 There's two kind of nations I sure can't understand
That's Chinese women and a doggone Dago man (BLIP-2)

The formulas in these stanzas are widespread, and both couplets contain ethnic slurs. Though the message in stanza 1, wherein the slur is secondary to the main theme of "rejection," and the message in stanza 2, which is more directly an ethnic slur, seem to bear no relation to each other, the image in the first stanza seems to have triggered a similar image in the second. Indeed, the more common first line associated with stanza 1 is

121 I'm going to tell you, daddy, like the Chinaman told the Jew
(SMIT-3)

The singer in example 120 may have known of this variant, which would reinforce an association with an anti-Chinese image in the second stanza.

It is, of course, impossible to trace free association from stanza to stanza; one would have to psychoanalyze the individual singers. This purely speculative approach to the study of stanzaic juxtapositions is a far cry from the more concrete, structural description of formula-links.

The imprecision of stanza-ordering in comparison with formula or line juxtaposition emphasizes the small-unit structure of the blues. Although the stanza is the textural unit of this song form, the formula is the structural unit, and it is at the formulaic level that the nature and pattern of blues composition is best observed.

XV THE FORMULAIC ANALYSIS OF THE RECORDED REPERTOIRE OF
GARFIELD AKERS: AN APPLICATION OF THE THEORY

In this chapter, the rules of blues competence will be tested in actual blues performances. The formulaic structure of the blues as outlined in previous chapters will be applied to the recorded repertoire of Garfield Akers. The result will be a concrete demonstration of the ways in which a blues singer manipulates the rules of blues compositional competence.

As stated earlier, the boundaries of any given blues formula become clearer as one moves from generalities to specific cases. Where formulas are described as abstract entities, outside of the context of the lyrics in which they occur, they tend to lose their shape and to melt away. In looking at actual song texts, however, the individual formulas from which the lyrics are composed assume a concrete form and become clearly distinguishable as the basic units of blues composition.

In structural studies, especially, the application of the theory is at least as enlightening as its description. Vladimir Propp applied his theory of the morphology of the Russian folktale to one short Marchen, and in the process, made clear many of the theoretical points of his study.¹ In the same way, a structural study of the repertoire of one singer will do much to clarify the theories presented in this study.

The first problem in such an application is to decide which singer to choose. In theory, any of the 347 singers represented in the corpus under analysis would make a good test case, but certain practical con-

¹ Morphology of the Folktale, ed. Louis A. Wagner, trans. Laurence Scott, 2nd. ed., Publications of the American Folklore Society Bibliographic and Special Series, Vol. 9, Indiana University Research Center in Anthropology, Folklore, and Linguistics, No. 10 (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1968 orig. published in Russian, 1928), pp. 96-99.

siderations make some singers more suitable than others. A singer had to be chosen whose recorded repertoire is not so extensive as to make the analysis overly long. Selecting a few songs from a singer's repertoire also presents some problems, since no one song should be "better" for the purposes of this analysis than another. There are no possible criteria for selecting one song over another for analysis from the repertoire of a singer; therefore, such a random selection would be open to the charge of choosing one's examples to fit one's theories.

The choice, then, was limited to those singers who recorded only a few songs, perhaps six or less. By the same token however, a singer who recorded only one song would be unacceptable, since any one song may be seen as exceptional or atypical in respect to the entire corpus. The other practical consideration was the clarity of the singer's lyrics. It would be useless to choose a singer whose transcriptions are full of hypothetical lines and undecipherable lyrics, since a formulaic study is dependent upon clear, error-free transcriptions.

With these considerations in mind, I began to read through the entire list of singers and their songs, which was organized in alphabetical order according to the singer's last name (see the list of the corpus). As it turned out, the very first name in the corpus fit the criteria for analysis. Garfield Akers' entire recorded repertoire consists of four songs, and the transcriptions of these songs are free of questionable phrases.

Although Akers is a convenient example for the purposes of this analysis, is he a typical example of a race record artist? Since it would be difficult to establish criteria for "typicality" in blues singers, this question is not easily answered. In terms of his recorded output, he was probably atypical, since the average number of songs recorded by

blues singers is about six,² and Akers recorded only four songs. He is typical, however, in his choice of recorded material. He is neither highly innovative and original, as was John Estes for example, nor does he rely very heavily upon the compositions of other singers, as do many of the vaudeville performers. As will be shown, one of his songs is a definite copy of another blues, but his other songs, though traditional in their formulaic structure, cannot be traced to any other specific compositions. Akers, therefore, seems to be somewhat average in his creative abilities, judging by his recorded repertoire, and this is a positive criterion for the purposes of this analysis.

Little is known about Garfield Akers. He was born at the turn of the century in De Soto County, Mississippi. Much of his performing career was spent in the company of Joe Callicott, playing at country suppers and local juke joints. On 23 September 1929, and again on 21 February 1930, he made recordings for a field unit of the Vocalion Record Company in the Peabody Hotel in Memphis Tennessee. On both occasions, his partner, Joe Callicott, accompanied him; Callicott played second guitar behind Akers in the 1929 session, and recorded his own songs in the 1930 session. In all, Akers recorded four songs, which were all issued on the Vocalion label. He died in 1959, and his entire recorded repertoire consists of the four songs he recorded for Vocalion.³

Akers' style of singing is almost chant-like and seems quite close

² I base this figure on the average number of songs per singer in the corpus under analysis.

³ The sparse information on Akers was gleaned from Paul Oliver, record notes to *Blue Horizon* BN-4606; and John Godrich and Robert M. W. Dixon, comps., *Blues & Gospel Records 1902-1942*, rev. ed. (London: Storyville Publications, 1969), p. 37.

to field-holler singing. Three of his songs show the typical A²A stanzaic pattern ("Cottonfield Blues--Part 1," "Dough Roller Blues," and "Jump-in' and Shoutin' Blues"), whereas "Cottonfield Blues--Part 2" exhibits a varied textural pattern from stanza to stanza: AA, A²A², AA, A²A, and AA, respectively. His guitar-playing establishes a simple, repetitive rhythm with little embellishment; the most notable feature of his instrumental style is his tendency to dampen the strings immediately after striking them, causing a muffled, staccato sound.

The following songs are his entire recorded repertoire, given in the order in which they were recorded. Each stanza has been reduced to the basic blues couplet, using the same method of transcription as outlined in the methodological introduction to this study. There are no substantial differences in the repeated lines of the A² features in Akers' songs; at most, he varies a vocatory element between the first and second singing of an A² line. Those phrases which are formulaic, in the sense that analogues for them can be found in the rest of the blues corpus, are underlined with a single line. Those phrases which may be formulaic, judging from similar types of phrases in the rest of the corpus, are underlined with a double line. Those phrases which are unique in the corpus are not underlined.

"Cottonfield Blues--Part 1" (AKER-1)

- 1 I said look a-here mama; what in the world are you trying to do
You want to make me love you; you going to break my heart in two

I said you don't want me; what made you want to lie
Now the day you quit me fair brown, baby that's the day you die

- 5 I'd rather see you dead; buried in some cypress grove
Than to hear some gossip mama, that she had done you so

It was early one morning, just about the break of day
And along brownskin coming, man and drove me away

- Lord my baby quit me; she done set my trunk outdoors
 10 that put the poor boy wandering Lord along the road
I said trouble here mama, and trouble everywhere you go
And it's trouble here mama; baby good gal I don't know

"Cottenfield Blues--Part 2" (AKER-2)

- 1 I got something I'm going to tell you; mama keep it all to yourself
Don't you tell your mama; don't you tell nobody else
I'm going to write you a letter; I'm going to mail it in the air
Then I know you going to catch it, babe in this world somewhere
 5 I'm going to write you a letter; I'm going to mail it in the sky
Mama I know you going to catch it, when the wind blows on the line
Ohhhh, mama I don't know what to do
I knows you'll go; leave me all lowdown and blue
Ohhhh, that's the last word you said
 10 And I just can't remember babe the last old words you said

"Dougli Roller Blues" (AKER-3)

- 1 And I rolled and I tumbled, and I cried the whole night long
And I rose this morning, and I didn't know right from wrong
Have you ever woke up, and found your dough roller gone
Then you wring your hands, and you cry the whole day long
 5 And I told my woman, just before I left your town
Don't you let nobody tear the barrelhouse down
And I fold my arms, and I begin to walk away
I said that's all right sweet mama; your trouble's going to come some day

"Jumpin' and Shoutin' Blues" (AKER-4)

- 1 Lord I know my baby sure going to jump and shout
When the train get here; I come a-rolling out
Lord I tell you it wasn't no need of mama trying to be so kind
Ah you know you don't love me; you ain't got me on your mind
 5 Mmmm, you ain't got me on your mind
And it's what is the need of baby trying to be so kind

- Memmem, tried to treat her right
But you started with another man, and stayed out every day and night
Says I ain't going down this big road by myself
 10 If I can't get you mama, I'm going to get somebody else
Memmem, what you want your babe to do
Says I know it's something; gal it ain't no use

In the following analysis, each phrase in these songs will be listed separately. Features of these phrases which are especially interesting or unique will be pointed out and commented upon. Where phrases are formulaic, analogues from the rest of the corpus will be listed within their stanzaic contexts. For most of the formulaic phrases, all analogues will be listed, but for the more common formulas, where there may be thirty or more analogous phrases in the corpus, only a selection of these analogues will be listed. For those formulas which are among the most frequent in the blues (see the appendices), only analogues with approximately the same surface manifestations will be listed.

The important features to notice in this analysis include the following:

- 1 the variety of ways in which Akers' formulas manifest themselves in other singers' blues
- 2 the different extraformulaic elements and formula-conjunctions which different singers employ when working with the same formula
- 3 the different degrees of popularity in the usage of the formulas.

In going through this formulaic analysis, the reader should keep in mind all of the structural rules which have been outlined in the last three chapters.

One should also be aware that this same type of analysis can be carried out on any other singer or group of singers. Although the results of other analyses may be different from those for Akers' repertoire, each analysis is equally profitable in terms of revealing the nature of

the formulaic structure of the blues.

"COTTONFIELD BLUES--PART 1" (AKER-1)

I said look a-here mama (AKER-1, line 1, x-formula)

This formula is extremely common in the blues and acts in some ways as a vocatory element. Less common, but still fairly wide-spread, is the similar phrase listen here. Akers adds a locutionary I said and a vocatory mama element to this formula in a manner similar to that of other singers. The following analogues are among the eighty or more examples of this formula in the corpus, and have been chosen because they are all juxtaposed with the same r-formula as Akers uses. The formula, however, is linked with a wide variety of other r-formulas as well.

1. Look a-here mama; what you want me to do
I work all the time; bring my money home to you (BLAK-10)
2. Now look here man; what more you want me to do
Give you my stew meat, and credit you too (BOGL-26)
3. Look a-here baby; what more you want me to do
I sacrificed my mother, just to get along with you (DARB-1)
4. Now look a-here Sue; what you trying to do
Giving away my luggage, and trying to love me too (KELJ-7)
5. Now look here mama; what am I to do
I ain't got nobody; tell my troubles to (McCOJ-3)
6. Look a-here look a-here; what you want me to do
Give you my jelly; then die for you (MEMM-2)
7. Now look a-here mama; what you trying to do
I believe to my soul, you break my heart in two (WALKB-1)
8. Look a-here look a-here; what you want me to do
You knew my jelly didn't die for you (WIGG-3)
9. Now look a-here baby; now tell me what you going to do
You can't marry me, and somebody else too (WILLS-18)

what in the world are you trying to do (AKER-1, line 1, r-formula)

This is one of the ten most frequent r-formulas in the blues (see Appendix A). The surface manifestation which Akers has chosen is not unusual. The important feature of this manifestation is the inclusion of the embedding element try to within the structure of the formula what you do. The phrase in the world is an optional adjectival element which often attaches itself to the word what in the blues. The following list includes similar surface manifestations of this formula.

- 10 Woman woman woman woman Lord what in the world you trying to do
Baby the way you treat me, break my heart in two (BRAC-8)
- 11 Lord pretty mama I wonder what you trying to do
She make it trying to run with me, and my buddy too (DAYW-1)
- 12 Just tell me pretty mama; what you trying to do
You didn't do no more, than I looked for you to do (DAYW-2)
- 13 Now you trying to take my life, and all my loving too
You laid a passway for me; now what are you trying to do
(JOHR-20)
- 14 Now look a-here Sue; what you trying to do
Giving away my luggage, and trying to love me too (KELJ-7)
- 15 Black Minnie black Minnie what in the world are you trying to do
I believe trying to love me black Minnie, and my partner too
(McCL-14)
- 16 Baby you treat me *so unkind*; you always keep me feeling blue
Lord I sometimes wonder honey what you trying to do
(TAYC-2)
- 17 Now look a-here Louise; what you trying to do
You trying to give some man my loving, and me too (TEMP-3)
- 18 Now look a-here mama; what you trying to do
I believe to my soul, you break my heart in two (WALKB-1)
- 19 Now tell me baby; what you trying to do
You trying to love me, and some other man too (WILLS-39)

You want to make me love you (AKER-1, line 2, x-formula)

This is a manifestation of one of the ten most frequent x-formulas:

+human love +human (see Appendix A). The particular manifestation which Akers uses features the embedding element make, but Akers is unique in prefacing this manifestation with yet another embedding element, want. The following list shows how other singers use this formula, prefaced by the embedding element make.

20. Look here pretty mama, what you done done
You done made me love you; now your man done come (ANDE-1)
21. Can't you see mama, what you done done
You done made me love you; now your man done come (BLAAL-1)
22. You put the puppies on my mama; you drove me crazy too
You done made me love you; what can I do (CARRL-17)
23. Now look here baby; see what you done done
Made me love you; now your man done come (ESTE-20)
24. Now look a-here baby; see what you done done
Done made me love you now your man done come (ESTE-22)
25. Now look a-here baby; see what you done done
You done made me love you; now your man done come (ESTE-32)
26. Look here baby; see what you done done
You made me love you; now your man done come (ESTE-40)
27. I don't mind you going; please don't stay the whole night long
Because you made me love you baby, and I miss you when you go (GIBC-5)
28. Don't you let your gal fix you like my gal fixed me
She made me love her; now she's way down in Tennessee (HICR-17)
29. Oh you done made me love you; now you got me for your slave
From now on you'll be making whoopee baby in your lonesome grave (HILK-1)
30. Furnish you wood; furnish you coal
Make me love you; doggone your soul (HOWE-1)
31. See see rider; you see what you done done
Made me love you, and now your friend is come (JEFB-6)
32. I'm going to shoot my pistol; going to shoot my gattling gun
You made me love you; now your man done come (JOHR-11)

- 33 Mmm see see rider; see what you done done
You done made me love you; now you're trying to put me down
 (JOHTO-4)
- 34 Mmmmm baby honey don't you think I know
Said I wouldn't make a man love her, if he wouldn't shake hands
 and go (JONL-2)
- 35 Baby is all I want mama, just one more crack at you
If I can't make you love me, then I don't care what you do
 (JOHC-3)
- 36 See see rider; see what you done done
You made me love you; now your man done come (LEDB-4)
- 37 Feel like a broke-down engine; ain't got no drivers at all
What makes me love my woman; she can really do the Georgia crawl
 (McTH-16)
- 38 Hey baby see what you done done
You went made me love you; now your man did come (NELST-1)
- 39 I love my baby, and I tell the world I do
What made me love her; you'll come and love her too
 (PATT-13)
- 40 My heart is aching all over that man
What makes me love him; I can't understand (RAIN-11)
- 41 What makes me love you baby; she loved me when I was down
 Well now she was nice and kind; ooo well well she did not dog
 me around (WHEA-19)
- 42 See see mama; what you done done
Made me love you; now your man done come (WHIW-3)

you going to break my heart in two (AKER-1, line 2, r-formula)

This formula occurs only two other times in the corpus. Note that in every case it is attached to a different x-formula, but rhymed with the same, first-line r-formula in the couplet.

- 43 Woman woman woman woman Lord what in the world you trying to do
 Baby the way you treat me, break my heart in two (BRAC-8)
- 44 Now look a-here mama; what you trying to do
 I believe to my soul, you break my heart in two (WALKB-1)

I said you don't want me (AKER-1, line 3, x-formula)

This is a common formula in the blues. As Akers uses it, the formula is placed in an if . . . then equation, although the words if and then have been deleted in an optional surface transformation. The following are a few of the over seventy-five occurrences of this formula in the corpus. Note that the word if is usually present.

- 45 I said if you don't want me, why don't you tell me so
Because it ain't like a man that ain't got nowhere to go
(BROW-1)
- 46 If he didn't want me, he didn't have to lie
The day I see him; that's the day he'll die
(CRAW-1)
- 47 If you don't want me, why don't you tell me why
Because you flirting with the undertaker; I mean it ain't no lie
(JACK-13)
- 48 Girl if you don't want me, why don't you let me know
So I can leave at once, and hunt me somewhere else to go
(JEFF-13)
- 49 Now if you don't want me baby, why don't you tell me so
Then I can sleep at night, and won't have to dream no more
(McPB-2)
- 50 Now if you don't want me, baby give me your right hand
I'll go back to my woman; you go back to your man (McTW-17)
- 51 If you don't want me mama, now let your daddy me
For me I may find someone that cares for me (MONTE-4)
- 52 And if you don't want me baby, you don't have to pay me no mind
Because I done got tired of you driving me; ???ing me all the time
(RAME-2)
- 53 Every time you leave me, I hang my head and cry
If you don't want me baby, please tell me the reason why
(SHIB-3)
- 54 Don't want me mama, don't you tell no lies
Because the day you quit me; that's the day you die
(WILL-3)

what made you want to lie (AKER-1, line 3, r-formula)

This is another common formula in the blues. It usually manifests

itself in one of two ways: +human tell +human a lie, where the word lie is a noun, and +human lie to +human, where the word lie is a verb. In the latter case, the second +human is always deleted in the surface structure, so that the word lie becomes the rhyme-word. This second argument in the predication may also be deleted in the former case, but this deletion is optional (compare examples 55 and 56). Aker's use of two embedding elements, made and want, with this formula is unique in the corpus. The following list includes a portion of the more than forty instances of this formula in the corpus.

55. I ain't going to tell you no story; tell you no doggone lie
Say when you get to loving, man I hear about die (ALET-19)
56. You said you loved me; you know you told a lie
Oh never mind, never mind (BOYG-1)
57. Now down on Smith Street, where you can get your rockin' rye
Boy that's what I'm talking about, and I ain't taking no lie
(CARRL-26)
58. I'll tell you what I'll do, and I sure God ain't going to tell no lie
I believe I'll lay down; take morphine and die (COLLS-1)
59. I want to tell you something; I wouldn't tell you a lie
Wild women are the only kind that do ??? (COX-2)
60. I can't keep from worrying; Lord I can't keep from telling you lies
Lord I would do all right with you, baby but you know you try to
be too wise (DAVIW-23)
61. Now depot agent don't tell me no lie
Did my baby stop here; did she keep on going (ESTE-7)
62. Stinging is my trade; I don't have to lie
If you feel my stinger, you want to until you die (HARZ-4)
63. Now tell me pretty mama tell me; please don't lie
Can your sweet papa stop by here, or must I pass on by
(JACKC-9)
64. Don't tell no stories; please don't tell no lies
Did my gal stop here; Lord did mama keep on by (JEFR-24)
65. I'm going to Newport News; just to see Aunt Caroline Dyer
She's the fortune-telling woman; oh Lord and she don't tell no lies
(STEV-7)

- 66 It's eighteen hundred, and it's ninety-five
 This people in town don't do nothing, but tell tell dirty lies
 (UNKA-2)
- 67 I'm going to shoot you woman, as long as my pistol will fire
 Because this is Jesse James, and you should not tell him a lie
 (WASBS-2)
- 68 You told everybody I didn't do nothing but lie
 I wouldn't give you women even time to die (WHEA-22)

Now the day you quit me fair brown (AKER-1, line 4, x-formula)

This formula is one of the ten most frequent x-formulas in the blues (see Appendix A). The formulaic predication generates either the verb leave or the verb quit. The time adverbial the day which prefaces this manifestation of the formula is not unusual, and the following list shows the use of this formula with both the time adverbial and the choice of the verb quit in the surface predicate.

- 69 I love you pretty mama; believe me it ain't no lie
The day you dare to quit me, baby that's the day you die
 (BLAK-1)
- 70 The day you quit me, that's the day you die
 (BLAK-14)
- 71 Now you three times seven; you know what you want to do
Now the day that you quit me, I won't be mad with you
 (ESTE-4)
- 72 You three times seven, you three times seven; you ought to know
 what you want, you ought to know what you want to do
Now the day that you quit me, and I won't be mad with, I won't
 be mad with you (ESTE-26)
- 73 Honey honey I'm going to tell you the truth
The day you quit me, that's the day you die (HICR-4)
- 74 Black Minnie black Minnie you know you ain't doing me right
But the day you quit me black Minnie, I swear that's the day you
 die (MCCL-14)
- 75 Well I love you Mr. Charlie; honey God knows I do
But the day you try to quit me; brother that's the day you die
 (MOOR-1)

76 It may be a week; it may be a month or two
But the day you quit me honey, it's coming home to you
 (SMIB-1)

77 Don't want me mama; don't you tell no lies
Because the day you quit me, that's the day you die
 (WILLJ-3)

baby that's the day you die (AKER-1, line 4, r-formula)

This formula is often linked with the previous one; but as some of the following examples show, it may also be juxtaposed with other x-formulas.

78 Ah watch her boy, as she pass by
 Because the day I catch you with her, boy that's the day you're
going to die (BIGB-18)

79 I love you pretty mama; believe me it ain't no lie
 The day you dare to quit me; baby that's the day you die
 (BLAK-1)

80 Love you pretty mama; believe me it ain't no lie
 The day you try to quit me; baby that's the day you die
 (BLAK-2)

81 Hey hey love you till the day you die
 Nobody but me, you know the reason why (BLAK-11)

82 The day you quit me baby, that's the day you die (BLAK-14)

83 Love you mama till the sea run dry
 Lord I love you rider Lord till the day you die (BRAC-6)

84 If he didn't want me, he didn't have to lie
 The day I see him; that's the day he'll die (CRAWR-1)

85 Well it's so long so long baby; I must say goodbye
 I'm going to roam this highway, until the day I die (GILL-8)

86 Honey honey I'm going to tell you the truth
 The day you quit me; that's the day you die (HICR-4)

87 Going to tell you this; ain't going to tell no lie
 Day you leave me; that's the day you die (JOHJO-1)

88 Black Minnie-black Minnie you know you ain't doing me right
 But the day you quit me black Minnie; I swear that's the day you
die (McCL-14)

- 89 Well I love you Mr. Charlie; honey God knows I do
But the day you try to quit me; brother that's the day you die
(MOOR-1)
- 90 I've got the freight train blues, but I'm too darn mean to cry
I'm going to love that man till the day he dies (SMIT-15)
- 91 Lord I'm going to leave here walking; chance is that I may ride
Because I'm going to ramble until the day I die (THOR-11)
- 92 Don't want me mama; don't you tell no lies
Because the day you quit me; that's the day you die
(WILLJ-3)
- 93 You couldn't see my baby passing by
Mama be your crawling king snake till the day I die
(WILLJ-16)

I'd rather see you dead (AKER-1, line 5, x-formula)

This formula is part of a logical equation rather X than Y, which is fairly rare in the blues. Akers' addition of the PN^{emb} see is not common, but there are analogues in examples 100 and 102.

- 94 I'd rather be dead; buried in the sea
Than to have that man I love say he don't want me (COXI-1)
- 95 Now I'd rather be dead; sleep in an old hollow log
And to be here baby, and you doing me like a dog (ESTE-8)
- 96 I'd rather be dead in some lonesome place
Than for my man treating me this a-way (FLON-2)
- 97 Lord I'd rather be dead mama, mouldering in the clay
Seeing my sweet baby treated this a-way (HULL-5)
- 98 I would rather be dead, and six feet in my grave
To be way up here honey, treated this a-way (JAMS-2)
- 99 I'd rather be dead baby; buried in the deep blue sea
Than to be so far from home baby; people making a fool of me
(JORC-11)
- 100 See you dead now in ~~so~~ cedar grove
Than to see some man now bothering with your clothes
(McCOJ-7)
- 101 I'm going to kill my man; then I'm going to kill myself
I'd rather we both be dead, than to see him with someone else
(MOOR-5)

102 I'd rather see you dead; straight down in your grave
To see you give another man Lord my *roof* and *plate* (RICHM-2)

103 Lord my good man don't want me no more
Well I wished I was dead, and in the land I'm doomed to go (SPIV-13)

104 I'd rather be dead, and in my horrible tomb
To hear my woman; some man done taken my room (TEMP-2)

105 Because I'd rather be dead; buried on my face
Than to love you woman; you treat me this a-way (WILK-2)

buried in some cypress grove (AKER-1, line 5, r-formula)

This is an interesting and unusual poetic image. Although it is often associated with Skip James' "Cypress Grove Blues," (JAMS-2) both Akers and Joe McCoy (McCOJ-7) used this formula before James made his recording.

106 I would rather be buried in some cypress grove
To have some woman Lord, I can't control (JAMS-2)

107 See you dead now in some cedar grove
Than to see some man now bothering with your clothes (McCOJ-7)

Than to hear some gossip mama (AKER-1, line 6, x-position)

This phrase is unique in the corpus under analysis.

that she had done you so (AKER-1, line 6, r-formula)

This is one manifestation of a formula which also allows the verb treat in the surface predicate. It may also allow the verb hurt, as in example 109, but this might be stretching the boundaries of the formula a bit far.

108 Baby baby what makes you treat me so
I've done all that a poor boy could do (DARB-1)

109 I never earned nothing, oh so much to hurt me so
On when I was talking to my babe that morning, and she told me
that I didn't ??? (JONL-6)

- 110 When you used to be my gypsy, done just so and so
Now I got another baby; I can't use you no more (LEWF-14)
- 111 I never would have thought that my baby would treat me so
Oh she broke my heart; when she grabbed that B&O (MCTW-28)
- 112 You wonder why I treat you so
You should have sense enough to know (SPAN-1)
- 113 Because I'm going up the country; coming here no more
Oh I love you woman, but you always treat me so (WILK-2)

It was early one morning (AKER-1, line 7, x-formula)

This formula is an "upgraded" adverbial element. The time adverbial does not refer directly to any particular action and, therefore, becomes a surface-level sentence with an empty it as its subject. The it was is sometimes deleted (see 116, 122, and 124); whether this manifestation is to be taken as an adverbial element of the r-formula or as a formula in its own right is problematical. There are over fifty-five examples of this formula in the corpus, from which the following list is taken:

- 114 Say it's in the morning; so late in the night
When she's loving your man, she loves you just right (ALET-19)
- 115 Now it was early one morning mama; I was on my way to school
Lord that's when I got the notion to break my mama's rule (ARNK-1)
- 116 Soon one morning, I heard a panther squawl
Tell your mama caught the local; you catch the cannonball (BLAAL-2)
- 117 Lord it's soon in the morning; going to believe I'll leave here (BRAC-4)
- 118 Lord it's early this morning, Lord about four o'clock
There was something in my bedroom began to reel and rock (BRADT-4)
- 119 Lord it was early in the morning, about the break of day
With my head on the pillow, where my goat Lord used to lay (BYRD-1)

- 120 It was soon this morning; I heard my doorbell ring
I thought Slim was working, and he wasn't doing a doggone thing
(HARZ-4)
- 121 It was early one morning, just about the break of day
Says I thought I heard my sweet baby say (JACKC-22)
- 122 Lord early one morning, just about the break of day
A passenger train carried my man away (RUPO-1)
- 123 It was early this morning; I was lying out on my floor
I was keeping daily watch on my wall, so that granddaddy won't
crawl in my house no more. (SHOR-5)
- 124 Early one morning, baby something was on my mind
I thinking about my welfare, and I just couldn't keep from crying
(WILK-11)
- 125 It was early one morning, about the break of day
Don't you hear me crying; won't you lead me where to stay
(WOOO-4)

just about the break of day (AKER-1, line 7, r-formula)

This formula is quite common in the blues and usually follows some allusion to "morning" in the ~~A~~-formula. The following are a few of the more than thirty-five occurrences of this formula in the corpus.

- 126 Captain rung the bell this morning, just about the break of day
Said now it's time for you to go rolling; buddy why don't you
be on your way (ARNK-29)
- 127 I got up this morning, just about the break of day
I could hear a *bunch of* bloodhounds a-coming down my way
(COLLS-14)
- 128 My man quit me this morning, just about the break of day
And he told me he was going away to stay (HENRL-1)
- 129 He met me one sunny morning, just about the break of day
I was drinking my moonshine; he made me throw my knife away
(MEMM-35)
- 130 Went home this morning, about the break of day
Ha babe he's just staying away (WILLJ-2)
- 131 And hey what makes a rooster crow at the break of day
That's to let the rounder know the working man is on his way
(WOOH-3)

And along brownskin coming (AKER-1, line 8, x-formula)

This phrase is a member of one of the most frequent (and most diffuse) formulas in the blues: +human moves towards some place (see Appendix A). The surface manifestation used here might be represented as +human come along (here), where the place here is deleted in a surface-level transformation. The following are other examples of this particular manifestation.

132 If you got a good bull-cow, better feed him every day
Because may come along some young cow, and tow your bull away
 (B16B-13)

133 Standing on the corner, *all ??? man*
Police come along; take me by the hand (EDMT-1)

134 Said come along mama; give me a hug
 You got the world; I got the stopper and the jug (HICR-16)

135 Oh up in my room, I bowed down to pray
Say the blues come along, and they drove my spirit away
 (HOUS-3)

136 I bought all her clothes; I bought her a diamond ring
Then along come a fatmouth; keep me shaking that thing
 (JACKC-21)

137 Now January February and March too
The women come along, and showed her just what to do
 (JACKC-24)

138 If you got a no-good bull-cow, you ought to keep your bull bull
 at home
Say may come along a young heifer, and just tow your bull from
 home (PATT-22)

139 I picking up the newspaper, and I looking in the ads
And the policeman come along, and he arrested me for vag
 (THOR-7)

140 Along came John, who's my best friend
 Cut his head, till it was a sin (WILSH-2)

Lord and drove me away (AKER-1, line 8, r-formula)

This formula often includes the adverbial element further, and with

this element, is always adjoined to the x-formula the more you cry. Akers, however, does not use this manifestation of the formula, preferring an unembellished predication.

- 141 I wonder what can the matter with poor Betsy Mae
Lord she got mad, and drove poor me away (ALET-17)
- 142 That's all right baby; *sorry* you drove me away
Well now you don't think ooo well well that you may need my help
some day (HOGG-1)
- 143 I'm going to Fishamingo, because I'm sad today
Say the woman I love, she done drove me away (HOWE-2)
- 144 I'm going I'm going; crying won't make me stay
The more you cry, further you drive me away (HURT-4)
- 145 I'm leaving town; crying won't make me stay
Baby the more you cry, the further you drive me away (JEFB-19)
- 146 Oh because I'm brown, Lord he want to drive me away
He knows he's a good honeydripper; Lord I want him every day (JOHE-4)
- 147 I'm going I'm going; your crying won't make me stay
For the more you cry gal, the further you drive me away (LEWF-2)
- 148 I'm going babe I'm going, and crying won't make me stay
Because the more you cry now now babe, the further you drive me away (McCL-18)
- 149 How my poor heart weeped and worried, baby when you drove me away
It was crying for poor boy McTell, some old rainy day (McTW-11)
- 150 I'm going I'm going; crying won't make me stay
The more you cry, the further it drive me away (MEMM-1)
- 151 And I'm going I'm going mama, and your crying won't make me stay
And the more you cry mama, the farther that you drive me away (MONTE-8)
- 152 I'm going to leave you, but I'll be back some old day
I'm going to make you remember how you drove me away (REEDW-1)
- 153 Now you done drove me baby, until you drove me away
Now someone has done something mama; about to take your place (SHAD-17)

- 154 I hate to leave St. Louis, and I tried so hard to stay
But the meanest treatment is driving me away (SMIBM-1)
- 155 And I'm going and I'm going, and your crying won't make me stay
 Baby the more you cry, the further you drive me away
 (STOK-9)
- 156 And I'm going I'm going, and your crying won't make me stay
 Because the more you cry gal, the further you drive me away
 (STOK-26)
- 157 She give me her love; even let me draw her pay
 She was a real good woman, but unkindness drove her away
 (TAMP-9)
- 158 I said please mama please don't drive me away
 Because I'd be a good fellow mama, if you would please let me
 stay (TURNB-1)
- 159 I'm standing on my mother's grave, and I wished I could see her
 face
 I be glad when that day comes, ooo well when these blues drive me
away (WHIW-5)
- 160 Well my mother she gone, and I hope she gone to stay
 I have a mean step-father; he done drove me away (WILLJ-9)

Lord my baby quit me (AKER-1, line 9, x-formula)

This is another manifestation of the x-formula in AKER-1, line 4.

- 161 Says I can't live for loving, but I just can't help myself
Now the little woman I'm loving quit me; well I sure don't want
 nobody else (ARNK-20)
- 162 Woke up this morning; couldn't even walk in my shoes
My baby just quit me; she left me with the bust up blues
 (BRAC-10)
- 163 Have you woke up in the morning; *you weep and moan*
Your best girl quit you; left you all alone (BRAC-11)
- 164 Because my woman had done quit me, didn't have nowhere to go
 (COLFJ-1)
- 165 Say my gal just quit me now man; pulled in another lane
 Didn't want to come back, till I bought an airplane
 (EDWF-1)
- 166 Says my woman she quit me; keep me worried and blue
 Take me in your arms, and love me like you used to do
 (FULB-12)

- 167 When you see me coming; my head hanging all down
It's that my woman done quit me; the news all over town (GIBC-17)
- 168 I used to didn't blow gauge; drink nothing of the kind
But my man quit me, and that changed my mind (GRELI-5)
- 169 My man quit me this morning, about the break of day
And he told me he was going away to stay (HENRL-1)
- 170 Cherry Ball quit me; she quit me in a calm good way
Lordy what to take to get her; I carries it every day (JAMS-3)
- 171 I'm going to run to town; talk with that chief of police
Tell him my good gal has quit me, and I can't live in no peace (JEFB-9)
- 172 My wife has quit me, and my best pigmeat gal has too
All of ??? *Lord* here with the chinch bug blues (JEFB-29)
- 173 Lord I'm going to the station; going to tell the chief of police
Roberta done quit me, and I can't see no peace (LEDB-2)
- 174 You up and quit me; do anything you want to do
Some day you'll want me, and I won't want you (MEMM-15)
- 175 Lord I quit my kid-man, because I caught him in a lie
And all I can hear now is his moaning and his mournful cry (MOOAL-6)
- 176 You quit me pretty mama, because you couldn't be my boss
But a rolling stone don't gather no moss (NICK-6)
- 177 Mmmmm, now my poor heart is aching for me
My black woman has quit me; I'm going back to Culver City (PULL-1)
- 178 I did something last Winter; Lord I ain't going to do it no more
I quit a thousand-dollar woman, *but it wasn't worth ???* (SHAD-15)
- 179 Ever since you quit me mama, I ain't wanted nobody else
For I'd rather be with nobody, than I'd rather be howling by myself (SMIJ-2)
- 180 Say some strange something is easing down on me
Because my best baby has quit me, and the world she cared for me (SPAU-2)
- 181 And she quit me; she left me to sing this song
You never miss your friend, till you caught your train and gone (STOK-13)

182 Last time my baby quit me, I say I didn't no more want her around
But every time I see her smiling face, my kind-hearted feeling
come down (SYKR-14)

183 There's so many women; there's so many different kinds
When one quit me, it's sure to worry my mind (THOR-3)

184 Go bring my shotgun, my *biskins* and my shells
You know my woman she done quit me, and I'm going to start
to raising hell (WILLS-36)

she done set my trunk outdoors (AKER-1, line 9, r-formula)

The four other manifestations of this formula show interesting variations in terms of both the arguments and the predicates of the formulaic predication.

185 I ain't got no shoes, and I ain't got no clothes
The house-rent man has done put my things outdoors (CARRL-37)

186 I'm going to ask my rider, would she set my trunk outdoors
I don't mean quitting you, but I got another place to go
(DICKT-1)

187 Listen here mama; black snake is wearing my clothes
And I told you about it, and you put my trunk outdoors
(JEFF-26)

188 Mmm little girl got buggy; she throwed all of my clothes outdoors
Well well right now I wonder will a shopping-bag hold my clothes
(WHEA-3)

That put the poor boy wandering Lord along the road (AKER-1, line 10,
r-position)

This phrase is unique in the corpus, although there are some phrases which are quite similar to it. It may be considered part of a formula human move upon the road. The predicate move upon may generate a number of different surface-level verbs. The following list includes some of the possible manifestations of this formula.

189 I been rolling and drifting along the road
Just looking for my room and board (BEAM-5)

190 When the bell started ringing, conductor holler all aboard
 Lord I picked up my suitcase; started walking down the road
 (BIGB-11)

191 I grabbed my suitcase; I took on up the road
 I got there; she was laying on the cooling board (HOUS-2)

192 Now my first love is in Texas; my (next one)(second) lives in
 Kokomo
 I'm going to catch me a freight train, and I'm going on down the
road (KELJ-5)

193 I got up babe babe in a *slumber*; I put on my shoes and clothes.
 I'm going to try to find my woman; I know she's strolling babe on
the road (RACH-6)

194 Mamma oh Lord Lord Lordy Lord
 My suitcase is too heavy to walk down that dusty road
 (TAYC-1)

195 So many days I would be walking down the road
 I could hardly walk with looking down on my clothes (WHIN-6)

I said trouble here mama (AKER-1, line 11, x-formula)

The three other manifestations of this formula show a deeper-level construction: it is trouble here. Akers chooses to delete the it is in his use of the formula.

196 Now it's trouble trouble; I been had it all my days
 Well it seems like trouble going to follow me to my grave
 (ARNK-10)

197 And it's trouble here; and it's trouble everywhere
So much trouble floating in the air (LEWF-12)

198 And it's trouble here; it's trouble in the air
 Says I want to go home, but I know it's trouble there
 (LENN-6)

and trouble everywhere you go (AKER-1, line 11, r-formula)

This is one of the ten most frequent r-formulas (see Appendix A). It has the peculiar feature of incorporating a part of the x-formula within its structure. The essence of the formula is everywhere +human go, and the following list shows some of the different ways in which this

r-formula is attached to x-formulas.

- 199 I got a bed in my bedroom, a pallet on my floor
Got to do the allie boogie, everywhere I go (BOGL-9)
- 200 Well it's hard times here, and it's hard time everywhere I go
I've got to make me some money, so I won't have these hard-luck
blues no more (GILL-17)
- 201 Out in the rain hail sleet and snow
I'm so down-hearted, everywhere I go (GRELI-12)
- 202 Hard times here, everywhere you go
Times is harder than I ever seen before (JAMS-4)
- 203 I used to be a drunkard, rowdy everywhere I go
If I ever get out of this trouble I'm in, man I won't be rowdy
no more (JEFB-33)
- 204 Lord I'm worried here; worried everywhere I go
I worried my rider so late last night, she had a mule-wagon
backed up to my door (JEFB-35)
- 205 Mosquitoes all around me; mosquitoes everywhere I go
No matter where I go, well they sticks their bills in me
(JEFB-63)
- 206 You sprinkled hot-foot powder mmm around my door
It keeps me with a rambling mind rider, every old place I go
(JOHR-23)
- 207 I'm going to sing this old song; ain't going to sing it no more
I'm going to sing this old song, everywhere I go (KELJ-1)
- 208 Said my good girl said she didn't want me no more
But she don't mind *dancing*, Lord everywhere I go (LEWF-4)
- 209 I'm a guitar king; singing the blues everywhere I go
I'm going to sing these blues, till I get back in terror'
(McCL-19)
- 210 Here comes grandpa, staring up and down the road
With that pipe in his hand he'll find you everywhere you go
(MEMM-18)
- 211 You have seen a lots of cats, and you going to see a lots of more
I got one-eyed cats, everywhere I go (MEMM-37)
- 212 Hey boll weevil don't sing the blues no more
Boll weevil's here; boll weevil's everywhere you go
(RAIN-2)

- 213 I am a snake doctor; gang of womens everywhere I go
 And when I get to flying sometime, I can see a gang of women
 standing out in the door (SHOR-3)
- 214 Said now Mary had a little lamb; I mean his fleece was white as
 snow
 Mary take that little lamb with her to most every places that
she go (SPRU-10)
- 215 I said a-weeping Mary, now Mary don't you weep no more
 And now stop and take your time, and do your work everywhere you go
 (STOK-2)
- 216 Take me in your arms mama, and rock me good and slow
 So I can take my time, and do my work everywhere I go
 (STOK-9)
- 217 Now little batch of posies laid on my door
 The Nehi women keep me, everywhere I go (STOK-16)
- 218 There's only four places in Memphis that I'd like to go
 Where I could have a good time, and do my work everywhere I go
 (STOK-27)
- 219 But I can't tell you, because you don't know
 People talking, everywhere I go (SYKR-11)
- 220 Well it's blues it's blues, everywhere I go
 Well well I'm going to find my good girl, ooo and I won't be blue
 no more (WELD-8)
- 221 I try to be good, every place I go
 But now you know there will come a day, ooo well well I will
 have some place I know (WHEA-18)
- 222 People talk; I can hear them whisper, everywhere I go
 All my friends come to see me, and say well I told you so
 (WHIJ-2)
- 223 I'm a rooting groundhog, and I root everywhere I go
 Well my baby had the nerve to tell me that she didn't want me no
 more (WILLJ-13)
- 224 I say bad luck and trouble, every place I go
 I believe somebody put bad luck on me; ooo well I believe now
 it's time to go (WILLJ-15)
- 225 Then I turn right around; went to the next door
 And the gypsy told me I have a woman, every place I go
 (YATE-1)

And it's trouble here mama (AKER-1, line 12, x-formula)

See AKER-1, line 11, x-formula.

baby good gal I don't know (AKER-1, line 12, r-formula)

226 Don't never drive a stranger from your door
He may be your best friend; mama says you don't know
(ALET-10)

227 Mmmh, baby you don't know you don't know
Papa's already going back to Kokomo (BLACK-1)

228 Loaded in the *dog* wagon; and down the road we go
Oh baby oh baby you don't know (BLACK-2)

229 Now she doing things that you don't never know (CALI-2)

230 Easy mama; somebody knocking at my door
It may be my yellow woman; mama you sure don't know
(CLAL-1)

231 You're walking for miles; no place to go
You're talking to yourself, Lord but you don't know
(HENDK-3)

232 My gal she's easy; some say she's slow
There's things about her, you don't know (HICR-16)

233 Don't never drive a stranger away from your door
It could be your best friend; mama you don't know (JEFB-24)

234 I said don't ever drive a stranger from your door
May be your sister or brother; say you don't never know
(KELJ-5)

235 Baby you know it may be my last time; rider you sure don't know
It may be my last time baby, knocking on your door (McCOC-1)

236 Lord I'm going down South, where the weather sure do suit my clothes
Well my baby said look daddy; I do swear to God you sure don't know
(PETW-3)

237 The reason why, I don't know
Sometimes I'm certain it's polio (RAIN-13)

238 Crying mmmh don't nobody know (SHAW-3)

239 I'm going to fly by easy; man you know I ain't going to fly very low
What I got in these sacks on my back man, you don't know honey
know (SHOR-3)

240 Baby please don't baby please don't I mean please don't go
Here's one thing that you don't know (SMIJ-5)

241 Lord I'm a poor boy; I'm going to and fro
What's on my mind, don't nobody know (SYKR-8)

242 But I can't tell you, because you don't know
People talking, everywhere I go (SYKR-11)

- 243 What is it tastes like gravy; boys I bet you don't know
Can you guess what tastes like gravy; it's tight if you really
want to know (TAMP-4)
- 244 Mama never drive a stranger from your door
He may be your best friend; baby you don't know (THPE-1)
- 245 How do you feel when you drive a good man from your door
Well well now you must stop look and listen; may be your best
friend; you don't know (WHEA-7)
- 246 Honey that's why I tell you; don't drive a good man from your door
Well well now you may need his help some day baby; oh well well
you don't know (WHEA-7)
- 247 Well my little red hen just don't know
Well now she say she love me; she wild about Mr. so-and-so
(WILLS-22)

"COTTONFIELD BLUES--PART 2" (AKER-2)

I got something I'm going to tell you (AKER-2; line 1, x-formula)

This x-formula is one of the ten most frequent in the blues (see Appendix A). At times it is difficult to decide whether some manifestations of this formula are indeed formulas or whether they are merely locutionary elements. The manifestation which Akers uses, however, is clearly an x-formula in its own right. Akers is unique in retaining the I'm going; other singers shorten the phrase by means of a deletion transformation to I got something to tell you. A syntactical re-ordering of this formula, I will tell you something, is just as frequent in the corpus under analysis. The following list shows only those manifestations of the formula with the same syntactical ordering as Akers uses.

- 248 I've got something to tell you; make the hair rise on your head
Got a new way of loving a woman; make the springs screech on her
bed (ALET-12)
- 249 Now I got something to tell you mama, and I really want you to
understand
Every man you see wearing britches; he sure God ain't no monkey-
man (ARNK-24)

- 250 I've got something to tell you baby; don't let it break your heart
So long together; now we've got to part (CHATP-5)
- 251 I am travelling this lonesome road, if I never get back no more
I have something to tell you, people just before I go (DAVIN-7)
- 252 Now something to tell you; keep it to yourself
Don't tell your sister; don't tell nobody else (ESTE-22)
- 253 I'm got something to tell you, and I know it ain't good news
Because a hesitating woman give me the hesitating blues (JACKJ-5)
- 254 Got something to tell you; make the hair rise on your head
Got a new way of getting down; make the springs tremble on your bed (JEFB-61)
- 255 Now I got something to tell you; make the hair rise on your head
I got a this old Elgin movement; make the springs tremble on your bed (JORC-11)
- 256 Got something to tell you; don't let it make you mad
I ain't going long down here, honey you heard I had (LEDB-15)
- 257 I've got something to tell you; know it's going to break your heart
We been together a good while, but now we got to part (MEMM-1)
- 258 I got something to tell you; hope it don't make you mad
I got something for you; make you feel glad (MEMM-2)
- 259 I got something to tell you; hope I don't make you mad
I got something for you that you never had (MEMM-17)
- 260 I got something to tell you, when I gets a chance
I don't want to marry; just want to be your man (PATT-4)
- 261 Now will you please be kind babe; let me speak just one more time
Because I have something to tell you baby; will ease your trouble
in mind (SPAU-2)
- 262 Now daddy daddy daddy listen; turn your lights down low
I got something good to tell you, she *holler* just before you go (SPRU-2)
- 263 I got something to tell you; going to make you mad
I got something for you; going to make you feel glad (WIGG-3)
- 264 I got something to tell you; is going to break your heart
Been together so long; now got to get apart (WIGG-3)

- 265 I got something to tell you, just before I go
Getting out of trouble this time; woman I won't do wrong no more
(WILK-1)
- 266 I got something to tell you; tell you before I go
Because I'm going up the country; coming here no more
(WILK-2)
- 267 Well I got something to tell you, mama when I get a chance
Well I don't want to marry; baby just want to be your man
(WILLJ-8)
- 268 I got something to ask you; I done got scared
I got to wait now, before I go to bed
(WILLK-1)
- 269 I got something to ask you; don't you get mad
I want you to give me something, I ain't never had (WILLK-1)
- 270 Well I got something to tell you; I ain't going to tell you no more
About fooling around with Mr. so-and-so
(WILLS-14)
- 271 Now I got something to tell you baby; you can't do
You can't love me, and some other man too
(WILLS-43)

mama keep it all to yourself (AKER-2, line 1, r-formula)

- 272 Now something to tell you; keep it to yourself
Don't tell your sister; don't tell nobody else
(ESTE-22)
- 273 But that ain't none of your business; keep it to yourself
Don't you tell your kid-man; please don't tell nobody else
(McCL-19)
- 274 I'll tell you something; keep it to yourself
Please don't tell your husband, Lord and no one else
(Patt-6)
- 275 I'm going to tell you something baby; want you to keep it to your-
self
If you don't give me all your sugar, you won't give it to
no one else
(SMIBM-3)
- 276 I'm going to tell you something; keep it to yourself
Don't tell your kid-man, and nobody else
(WILLS-14)

Don't tell your mama (AKER-2, line 2, x-formula)

This is another manifestation of the x-formula in line 1 of this song: +human tell +human. Those manifestations which, like Akers', include a negation element follow.

- 277 Now something to tell you; keep it to yourself
Don't tell your sister; don't tell nobody else (ESTE-22)
- 278 If you don't want to tell your mother that you soon will be coming
 home
 You better cut your late hours, and let other mens alone
 (GILL-15)
- 279 But that ain't none of your business; keep it to yourself
Don't tell your kid-man; please don't tell nobody else
 (McCL-19)
- 280 I'll tell you something; keep it to yourself
Please don't tell your husband; Lord and no one else (PATT-6)
- 281 Don't never tell nobody what your perfect good man can do
 You just get them anxious to try some of his good points too
 (SMIC-8)
- 282 Baby please don't tell my mother; please don't let my sister know
 Sure as you appreciate my death baby; will you please hang crepe
 on your door (SPRU-8)
- 283 If you see my mama before I do
Don't tell her, faro, what road I'm on (THOH-1)
- 284 Don't tell all the girls what that Peetie Wheatstraw can do
 That will cause suspicion now; you know they will try him too
 (WHEA-33)
- 285 I'm going to tell you something; keep it to yourself
Don't tell your kid-man, and nobody else (MILLS-14)

don't you tell nobody else (AKER-2, line 2, r-formula)

The use of this formula in the corpus under analysis is fairly restricted in terms of the stanzaic contexts in which it appears. The four examples below, as well as Akers' stanza, seem to indicate that the formula has become "ossified" within a particular stanzaic framework. There is, however, always the potential for new and innovative formula combinations.

- 286 Now something to tell you; keep it to yourself
 Don't tell your sister; don't tell nobody else (ESTE-22)
- 287 But that ain't none of your business; keep it to yourself
 Don't tell your kid-man; please don't tell nobody else
 (McCL-19)

288 I'll tell you something; keep it to yourself.
Please don't tell your husband. Lord and no one else
(PATT-6)

289 I'm going to tell you something; keep it to yourself
Don't tell your kid-man, and nobody else (WILLS-14)

I'm going to write you a letter (AKER-2, line 3, x-formula)

290 Says she won't write me no letter; she won't send me no telegram
She just a hard-headed woman, and she don't even give a damn
(ARNK-30)

291 I'm going to write a letter; mail it in the air
I'm going to find this gal; she's in the world somewhere
(BLAAL-1)

292 Now I'm going to write a letter; mail it in the air
Because the March wind blows; it blows news everywhere
(BUTLS-2)

293 Going to write a letter; mailed it in the air
Mail it by the window; love you everywhere (BUTLS-3)

294 The day you left me, won't wear black
I write you a letter; come sneaking back (COLLS-13)

295 I'm going to write you a letter; my wife and I ain't going to do
right no more
I know the way you treat me baby; Lord you did not want me no more
(DAVIW-17)

296 Now I met Alberta way out across the sea
Now she didn't write no letter, and she didn't care for me
(ESTE-19)

297 Now I wrote little Martha a letter; five day it return back to me
You know little Martha Hardin's house done burnt down; she done
moved on Bathurst Street (ESTE-30)

298 Write me a letter, and send it by mail
I want you to tell my dear old mother, I'm in the new Huntsville
Jail (EVANJ-1)

299 I'm going to write a letter; telephone every town I know
If I can't find her in West Selma, she must be in East Monroe I
know (JOHR-3)

300 Yes she wrote me a letter; what you reckon it read
Come home big papa; your loving baby's dead (LEDB-9)

- 301 Get me a pencil and paper; I'm going to sit right down
I'm going to write me a letter, back to Youngstown (LEWF-9)
- 302 I wrote her a letter; I mailed it in the air
You may know by that, I got a friend somewhere (LEWN-3)
- 303 I'm going to write you a letter soon in the morning; mail it in the
air
You can tell by that, babe I got a somewhere (McCL-13)
- 304 I met my Mary way across the sea
She wouldn't write me no letter; she didn't care for me
(McCOJ-6)
- 305 I wrote you a letter mama; put it in your front yard
I would love to come to see you, but your good mens got me barred
(McTW-1)
- 306 Oh you wrote me a letter to come back to Newport News
To leave the town, and don't spread the news (McTW-1)
- 307 I wrote you a letter mama; sent you a telegram
Not to meet me in Memphis, but meet me in Birmingham
(McTW-1)
- 308 I wrote my gal a letter, way down in Tennessee
Because I was up here hungry; hurry up and ??? to me
(NICK-4)
- 309 Somebody write write me a letter baby; I'm going to write it just
you see
See if my baby my baby do she thinking a little old thing of me
(PETW-1)
- 310 Going to write a letter; going to mail it in the air
When the north wind blows; blows news everywhere (RUPO-2)
- 311 My gal wrote a letter; how do you reckon it read
Come home little daddy; your father's might near dead
(STEV-8)
- 312 I wrote my baby a letter; she send me a telegram
She said daddy the reason I love you, you got ways just like a
lamb (SYKR-6)
- 313 Mam going to write me a letter; mama going to mail it in the air
Well well well going to send it up the country; mama now to see
if my little girl is there (WHEA-4)
- 314 Corrina Corrina what's the matter now
You didn't write no letter; you didn't love me nohow
(WIGG-4)

- 315 I'm going to write a letter now; going to mail it in the air
 I'm going to ask Dr. Jesus, if the Devil ever been there
 (WILLK-2)

I'm going to mail it in the air (AKER-2, line 3, r-formula)

This formula always follows some manifestation of the preceding formula I'm going to write a letter in the corpus.

- 316 I'm going to write a letter; mail it in the air
 I'm going to find this gal; she's in the world somewhere
 (BLAAL-1)
- 317 Now I'm going to write a letter; mail it in the air
 Because the March wind blows; it blows news everywhere
 (BUTLS-2)
- 318 Going to write a letter; mailed it in the air
 Mail it by the window; love you everywhere
 (BUTLS-3)
- 319 I wrote her a letter; I mailed it in the air
 You may know by that, I got a friend somewhere
 (LEWN-3)
- 320 I'm going to write you a letter soon in the morning; mail it in the air
 You can tell by that, babe I got a somewhere
 (McCL-13)
- 321 Going to write a letter; going to mail it in the air
 When the north wind blows; blows news everywhere
 (RUPO-2)
- 322 Mmm going to write me a letter; mama going to mail it in the air
 Well well well going to send it up the country; mama now see if
 my little girl is there
 (MHEA-4)
- 323 I'm going to write a letter now; going to mail it in the air
 I'm going to ask Dr. Jesus, if the Devil ever been there
 (WILLK-2)

Then I know you going to catch it (AKER-2, line 4, x-formula)

This phrase is unique in the corpus under analysis.

babe in this world somewhere (AKER-2, line 4, r-formula)

This formula usually acts as a modifier upon the predicate of its linked x-formula. Just as the formula at the break of day places the preceding formula within a temporal context, this formula places the

x-formula within a locative context. It may manifest itself as a prepositional phrase, or it may take the form of a complete sentence (see examples 325, 326, 328, 329, 330, 331, and 333).

324 Now I'm going to ring up China yeah man; see can I find my good gal over there
Says the good book tells me that I got a gal in this world somewhere (ARNK-5)

325 I'm going to write a letter; mail it in the air
I'm going to find this gal; she's in the world somewhere (BLAAL-1)

326 I'm going to go to the station, and try to find her there
And if the Lord has not got her, she's in this world somewhere (CARRL-39)

327 Hitch up my buggy; saddle up my black mare
You'll find me riding, mama Lord Lord in this world somewhere (JAMS-8)

328 Go and get me my black horse, and saddle up my grey mare
I'm going home to my good gal; she's in the world somewhere (JEFB-5)

329 Won't you wash my jumper; starch my overalls
I'm going to find my woman; says she's in the world somewhere (JOHTO-6)

★ 330 Won't you wash my jumper; starch my overalls
I'm going to find my woman; says she's in this world somewhere (JOHTO-7)

331 Hitch up my buggy; saddle up my black mare
Find my woman, because she's out in the world somewhere (JOHTO-10)

332 Just as sure as a sparrow, mama babe flying in the air
I got a loving sweet papa in this world somewhere (LINC-2)

333 Mother please don't worry; this is all my prayer
Just say your son is gone; I'm out in this world somewhere (ODEN-3)

334 You can catch my pony; saddle up my black mare
I'm going to find a rider, baby in the world somewhere (PATT-4)

335 Goodbye pretty mama; oh babe fare-thee-well
Lord I'm afraid to meet you in that other world somewhere (WILK-11)

336 I got me a grey pony down in my pasture somewhere
 I'm going to find my woman, baby in this world somewhere
 (WILLJ-8)

I'm going to write you a letter (AKER-2, line 5, x-formula)

See AKER-2, line 3, x-formula.

I'm going to mail it in the sky (AKER-2, line 5, r-position)

This phrase is unique in the corpus under analysis, although it has obvious similarities to the formula I'm going to mail it in the air.

The substitution of the word sky for the word air does not seem to change the imagery, but it does change the rhyme of the line.

Mama I know you going to catch it (AKER-2, line 6, x-position)

See AKER-2, line 4, x-position.

when the wind blows on the line (AKER-2, line 6, r-position)

This phrase is unique in the corpus under study. It seems to combine two images: wind spreading the news (see examples 292 and 310), and a telegraph or telephone wire spreading the news. This second image is also used by Ma Rainey:

337 I'm going to the Western Union; type the news all down the line
 Because my man's on the Wabash, darling and I don't mind dying
 (RAIN-19)

Ohhhh mama I don't know what to do (AKER-2, line 7, r-formula)

This is another manifestation of one of the ten most frequent r-formulas (see AKER-1, line 1, r-formula). The prefacing of the formula what human do with the PN_{emb} know and the addition of a negation element is one of the most common manifestations of this formula. By adding a paralinguistic and a vocatory element ohhhh mama to the front of this phrase, Akers stretches the r-formula to fill the entire first

line of the couplet. The following are other examples of this formula prefaced by the embedding element know and including negation.

- 338 Now my poor heart is aching, and I really don't know what to do
Says I got a strong notion; coming right on back home to you
(ARNK-32)
- 339 Mmmmm, mama come to my rescue
I'm feeling so bad, till I don't know what to do (BAKK-4)
- 340 If the blues don't kill me, they will drill me through and through
Woman I love don't know what to do (BLAK-4)
- 341 I keep the blues all night, and the whole day through
I'm so full of blues, I don't know what to do (CARRL-12)
- 342 I've been worried; I didn't know what to do
So I guess that's why I've had these midnight hour blues
(CARRL-13)
- 343 I'm so worried; don't know what to do
I waked up this morning mama feeling sad and blue (COLFJ-1)
- 344 I've got the rickets and the rackets, and my baby's got the Mobile
blues
I've got the Rock Island blues, and I don't know what to do
(COLFL-1)
- 345 I ain't got me nobody, carry my troubles to
I tell you peoples; I don't know what to do (COLLS-5)
- 346 I'm so sorry you heard; I don't know what to do
I'm sorry for the time I made you blue (GRELI-10)
- 347 I woke up this morning feeling sad and blue
Couldn't find my yo-yo; didn't know what to do (HARZ-1)
- 348 You so down-hearted; you don't know what to do
You ain't got nobody to tell your troubles to (HENDK-3)
- 349 Got a gang of brownskin sweet women; got a gang of high yellows too
I got so many womens; I don't know what to do (HULL-1)
- 350 I'm worried and bothered; don't know what to do
Reason I'm worried and bothered; it's all on account of you
(JEFB-28)
- 351 Sometime I feel disgusted, and I feel so blue
I hardly know what in this world baby a good man can do
(JEFB-45)

- 352 When I get drunk I'm evil; I don't know what to do
If I get my good chib, can get something good from you
(JOHE-2)
- 353 Now back in eighteen hundred and sixty-two
Folks mess around, but they didn't know what to do (LEEX-1)
- 354 Got a gang of brownskin womens; bunch of high yellows too
I got so many brownskins, I don't know what to do (LOFC-2)
- 355 Oh babe what's the matter with you
You worry me woman; babe I don't know what to do (McFAB-1)
- 356 My head and neck was painin me; seem like my back going to break
in two
I hurried to the neighbors that morning; I didn't know what in
the world to do (MEMM-7)
- 357 My head and neck was painin me; seem like my back going to break
in two
Lord I had such a mood that morning, I didn't know what in the
world to do (MEMM-11)
- 358 When the blues is trailing you, you don't know what to do
Go back to the one you love now; the Blues will soon leave you
(PETT-1)
- 359 I have a man I can't control; I don't know what to do
My man left me two this morning; now he's trying to come back at
noon (RAIN-2)
- 360 I asked my captain for to give me his best pair of shoes
For I'm barefoot; I ain't got nothing to wear Lord; I don't know
what to do (RICHM-3)
- 361 Mmmmm, baby when can I speak to you
If you don't talk to me soon, baby I don't know what I'm going to
do (SHOR-1)
- 362 I'm so wild about your sugar; don't know what to do
It's that granulated sugar; ain't nobody got it but you
(SMIBM-2)
- 363 I felt so low; don't know what to do
Ain't got nobody to tell my troubles to (SMIC-4)
- 364 I'm feeling blue; don't know what to do
Ain't got nobody to tell my troubles to (SMIC-4)
- 365 All day long I'm worried; all night long I'm blue
I'm so awfully lonesome; I don't know what to do (SMIC-34)
- 366 So they can eagle rock me; they can talk me about the things that
I used to do
I got the Nehi blues mama; don't know what in the world to do
(STOK-16)

- 367 I'm so lonesome lonesome; I don't know what to do
If you don't have no good woman, you'd be lonesome too
(THOR-1)
- 368 It's war in Ethiopia, and mama's feeling blue
I tell the cockeyed world I don't know what to do (WALLM-3)
- 369 Now that was down in Tallahassee, where I had these Tallahassee
blues
I got these blues so bad, don't know what in the world to do
(WASHL-1)
- 370 Everybody's bragging about your sugar sugar mama, and I'm almost
going bragging too
And if I can't get that sugar mama, ooo well well I don't know what
I will do (WHEA-43)
- 371 Well I don't know baby; I don't know what to do
Baby you is so sweet, but you just won't be true (WILLS-31)
- 372 Well I don't know baby; I don't know what to do
You know I don't want to hurt your feelings; baby even getting mad
with you (WILLS-31)

I knows you'll go (AKER-2, line 8, x-formula)

This is a manifestation of one of the ten most frequent x-formulas in the blues: thuman go away from some place (see Appendix A). In this manifestation, the "place" is unspecified and the word away has been deleted from the surface structure of the phrase. Akers is unique in prefacing this manifestation with the embedding element know. The following list includes those manifestations which are closest to Akers' use of the formula.

- 373 You can go; do anything you want to do
Some day you want me mama, and I won't want you (BLAK-12)
- 374 Why did you go, and leave me cold in hand
I know what it's all about; it was on account of your other man
(CARRL-29)
- 375 Now you may go honey you may go; you may stray all alone
But one of these days now little old sweet honey, you'll be out of
house and home (CHAB-32)
- 376 High water rising; get me troubled in mind
I got to go, and leave my daddy behind (DELAM-2)

- 377 Well you won't have to go; well you won't have to go
You can get what you want to right here in my liquor store
(ESTE-28)
- 378 You can go; you can stay
But you'll come home-some old lonesome day (GLAZ-2)
- 379 Now if you go, have to bring my good clothes on back
I says go on home mama; you got *ruses* all in your back
(HARY-1)
- 380 Now don't you leave me here; don't you leave me here
Just before you and your partner get ready to go, leave a dime
for beer (JACKC-10)
- 381 Now you may go, but you'll come back some day
And you'll be sorry that you went away (JOHN-14)
- 382 Now listen folks; don't mean no harm
I got to go, and beat my way back home (MCCOJ-12)
- 383 I got to go; got to leave my baby be
And I love my woman, but my woman do not care for me
(McFAB-1)
- 384 You may go babe; you may have your way
But when you think of your loving, I know that you cannot behave
(MOOAL-5)
- 385 You may go; you may stay
But she'll come back some sweet day (PATT-28)
- 386 Now I believe I'll go mama; don't feel welcome here
You're a no-good woman; you don't feel in you hard-working man's
care (SHOR-4)
- 387 When I go; please don't talk after me
Because I'm going where; to my supposed-to-be (SIMSH-2)
- 388 All I want is your picture; it must be in a frame
When you go, I can see you just the same (SMIB-8)
- 389 Now in case you want to go, now let me know
Here now tell me; would you really like to go (SPRU-9)
- 390 I hate to go, and I'm really afraid to stay
But I won't be around here mama, and let you have your way
(SYKR-13)
- 391 You didn't mean it baby; you hadn't no right to lie
So go baby go, and stay until you die (WILLX-1)

leave me all lowdown and blue (AKER-2, line 8, r-formula)

Akers is the only singer to use the phrase lowdown and blue in this formula. In the other manifestations, the "feeling" is simply described as "blue," or in one case (example 394) sad and blue. Akers also chooses to delete the deep-level verb feel from the surface-level phrase which he sings.

392 You going to leave me you going to leave me; you going to leave me blue

I want some of your loving; don't care what you do (CARBL-17)

393 When you left me baby, you left me feeling so blue
You know babe I didn't love no one but you, (CHATL-3)

394 Nobody knows what the sheik will do
They'll spend all their money; leave you sad and blue
(HILB-2)

395 When you left me, you left me feeling so blue
You know babe I didn't love no one but you (VINC-12)

•Ohhhh that's the last word you said (AKER-2, line 9, r-formula)

396 I asked the lady for a drink; this is what she said
I don't have the white, but I have the red (COVB-1)

397 Lord I remember what my big fat mama said
She so big and fat, got to put ashes all in my bed (HARY-1)

398 I went out last night; I got drunk; I was in whiskey up to my head
A young lady she walked up to me, and this is what she said
(JOHAL-3)

399 Put both hands on her hips, and these is the words she said
Said big boy I couldn't miss you if the good Lord told me you
was dead (NEWB-4)

400 Lord I woke up this morning with the blues all around my baby's bed
I turned my face to the wall; baby these are the words I said
(STOK-2)

And I just can't remember babe the last old words you said (AKER-2,

line 10, r-formula)

This is the same formula as in the preceding line, except that

Akers adds the PN_{emb} remember to the beginning of the line (see example 397, above).

"DOUGH ROLLER BLUES": (AKER-3)

There can be little doubt that Akers copied this song from a recording entitled "Roll and Tumble Blues," which Willie Newbern recorded almost a year prior to Akers' 1930 session. Akers' version is almost word-for-word the same as Newbern's, although he sings the lyrics to a different tune.

The following is the Newbern version:

401 And I rolled and I tumbled, and I cried the whole night long
And I rosed this morning mama, and I didn't know right from wrong

Did you ever wake up, and find your dough-roller gone
And you wring your hands, and you cry the whole day long

And I told my woman, Lord (just) before I left her town
Don't she let nobody tear her barrelhouse down

And I fold my arms Lord, and I (slowly) walked away
Says that's all right sweet mama; your trouble going to come some day
(NEWB-5)

Of course, the possibility exists that Newbern and Akers both learned this song independently from some third source, but there are at least two indications that Akers memorized this song verbatim from Newbern's recording. The verb rose in the second line of both Newbern's and Akers' song is an extremely rare manifestation of the woke up this morning formula (see Appendix B); in addition, Akers' use of the conjunction and to preface entire lines, as well as to join formulas in a line, is not consistent with the style of his other three recorded songs, but it is an important stylistic feature of Newbern's song. If Akers had merely used Newbern's song as a formulaic model for his own blues, one might expect the verb woke up or got up in line 2, as well as a poetic style which

was a bit closer to that of Akers' other three songs.

Robert Johnson also copied Newbern's song, when he recorded "If I Had Possession Over Judgment Day." He used Newbern's tune, but unlike Akers, he did not memorize Newbern's lyrics. Indeed, only two couplets in Johnson's song are taken from Newbern, and they occur consecutively in the middle of the song:

402 And I rolled and I tumbled, and I cried the whole night long
When I woke up this morning, my buscuit-roller's gone

Had to fold my arms, and I slowly walked away
I said in my mind, your trouble going to come some day
(JOHR-19)

Although Johnson retains Newbern's and preface in the first line, he has adapted the lyrics to his own style in several small ways. Note, for example, that Johnson has chosen the much more common verb woke up, instead of the rare rose in the first couplet.

The analysis of this song, then, is really an analysis of Newbern's song, as recorded by Akers. For this reason, Newbern's song will not appear in the analogues listed for formulas in the lyric, and any phrase which is unique in Akers' song will be labelled as such, even though it also occurs in Newbern's song.

And I rolled and I tumbled (AKER-3, line 1, x-formula)

This formula could be considered two separate formulas: I rolled and I tumbled. But it is more profitable to see this phrase as an idiom, such as "toss and turn," which cannot be further broken down. The following examples seem to indicate that this phrase is indeed idiomatic, but that some variation can still occur within the formula (see example 410).

403 Said you roll and you tumble, till it almost make you blind
When you get to thinking about your good gal; well you almost
to lose your mind
(ARNK-7)

- 404 Did you ever lie down at night, thinking about your brown
You commence rolling and tumbling; I guess I'm Tampa bound
 (BLAK-6)
- 405 And I rolled and I tumbled, and I cried the whole night long
 When I woke up this morning, my biscuit-roller's gone
 (JOHR-19)
- 406 Blues you made me roll and tumble; you made me weep and sigh
 Made me use cocaine and whiskey, but you wouldn't let me die
 (MARTS-2)
- 407 How do you think a poor man feels; one he loves stays out all
 night long
Oh Lord he's rolling and he's tumbling; know he just can't sleep
 alone (SHAD-7)
- 408 My girl rolled and tumbled; cried the whole night long
 She received that message that the man she loved was gone
 (THPE-3)
- 409 I rolled and I tumbled from side to side
 I was trying so hard to be satisfied (WHEA-20)
- 410 I twisted and I tumbled; I rolled the whole night long
 I didn't have no daddy to hold me in his arms (WILEG-2)

and I cried the whole night long (AKER-3; line 1, r-formula)

- 411 Lord I cried last night mama; then I cried the whole night long
 Going to go right mama; then I won't have to cry no more
 (ARNK-1)
- 412 Now don't you hear your mother crying; weeping and moaning all
night long
 Because old man Wild Water done been here; he took her best friends
 and gone (ARNK-23)
- 413 I moaned I moaned; I cried the whole night long
 I was wondering where in the world my man done gone
 (FLON-2)
- 414 I can't stay away; I done cried the whole night long
 The good woman I love, she packed her trunk and gone
 (JEFB-10)
- 415 How many times have I cried all night long
 You know I must love you baby, when I beg you to come back home
 (JOHL-13)
- 416 And I rolled and I tumbled, and I cried the whole night long
 When I woke up this morning, my biscuit-roller's gone
 (JOHR-19)

417 I walked and I wandered, crying the whole night long
Crying wonder will I ever get back home (McCOJ-19)

418 I just stay and suffer; sigh and cry all night long
Because the way I'm worried; lordy it sure is wrong (RAIN-4)

419 My girl rolled and tumbled; cried the whole night long
She received that message that the man she loved was gone
(THPE-3)

420 I am a little boy; (I'm crying all)(I cried the whole) night long
My stepfather he swears he done done me wrong (WILLJ-9)

And I rose this morning (AKER-3, line 2, x-formula)

As stated above, this is a very rare manifestation of the woke up this morning formula (see Appendix B). Only one other example of the verb rise occurs in this context in the corpus under analysis. Whether this example is actually a member of the same formula is debatable.

421 I rise with the blues, and I work with the blues
Nothing I can get but bad news (LINC-6)

and I didn't know right from wrong (AKER-3, line 2, r-formula)

The deep-level predicate of this formula usually generates the verb know, but there is one example (example 431) in which the verb tell fills the slot. Whether examples 423, 426, 428, and 433 are also proper members of this formula is questionable. Example 424 also seems to be a member of this latter group, but the transcription of the lyrics is uncertain, and thus it is difficult to tell.

422 If I mistreat you, I don't mean no harm
Because I'm a motherless child; don't know right from, don't know
right from wrong (BAKW-2)

423 Many nights I rambled, and I hid out the whole night long
Trying to teach my women how to do right from wrong (BIRB-1)

424 I thought I'd send her, *but I'd leave it* at home
Oh she showed a lot of farmers boys how to right from wrong
(BUALS-4)

425 Well, mama you don't allow me to fool around all night long
Now I may look like I'm crazy; poor John do know right from wrong
(ESTE-16)

426 Yes I'm a poor poor boy, and a great long way from home
I ain't got nobody, just to teach me right from wrong
(GILL-6)

427 If I mistreat you gal, I sure don't mean no harm
I'm a motherless child, and I don't know right from wrong
(HICR-5)

428 ~~Mama, mama~~
I ain't got no sweet mama, teach me right from wrong
(HILSY-1)

429 Well it ain't no love; sure ain't no getting along
Said my brown treat me so mean that I don't know right from wrong
(LINC-4)

430 If I mistreat you mama, I sure don't mean no harm
I'm a honeydripping papa; I don't know right from wrong
(MOOP-2)

431 I'm so far away from my home; well I can't tell right from wrong
Now my baby last night mama 'oh well she said now black man I'm going
(PETW-4)

432 Well there ain't no love; there ain't no getting along
My brown treat me so mean, sometime I don't know right from wrong
(SMIC-2)

433 Mama when I talk to you, God above know I don't mean no harm
But it's just because I love you, and I'm trying to teach you
right from wrong
(SMIJ-4)

434 If I mistreat you, I sure don't mean no harm
I'm a motherless child; don't know right from, don't know right
from wrong
(WEAC-2)

435 Well well the blues in my room; I don't know right from wrong
Because the blues in my kitchen; my buscuit-roller's gone
(WELD-8)

Have you ever woke up (AKER-3, line 3; x-formula)

This is another manifestation of the I woke up this morning formula (see Appendix B). It is somewhat unusual in that the adverbial element this morning is not present; but as the following list shows, when this formula is syntactically re-ordered into a question, the adverbial

element usually doesn't occur.

- 436 Did you ever wake up between midnight and day
And felt for your rider; she done eased away (AMOS-1)
- 437 Have you ever waked up babe between midnight and day
Turn over and grab the pillow, where your great gal used to lay (BARN-2)
- 438 Have you woke up in the morning; *you weep and moan*
Your best girl quit you; left you all alone (BRAC-11)
- 439 Did you ever wake up in the morning, and find your rider gone
I know just how it feels; that's why I composed this song (GIBC-11)
- 440 Did you ever wake up with the blues, and didn't have no place to go
And you couldn't do nothing, but just walk from door to door (HARD-1)
- 441 Have you ever woke up with them bullfrogs on your mind
(HARW-2)
- 442 Did you ever wake up in the morning baby; same thing all on your mind
Something keep you bothered mama; honey worried all the time (HILSY-1)
- 443 Did you ever wake up twixt night and day
Had your arm around your pillow, where your good gal used to lay (LINC-5)
- 444 Have you ever woke up with whiskey-drinking on your mind
You send away to that bootlegger, and you did not have a dime (POPE-1)
- 445 Did you ever wake up just at the break of day
With your arms around the pillow, where your daddy used to lay (RAIN-1)
- 446 Have you ever woke up in the morning; your bed going around and
around
You know about that baby; you have done throwed me down (TEMP-4)
- 447 Well well well did you ever wake up mama baby now between
midnight and day
Oh with your head on your pillow, babe where your good man he
once have lay (WHEA-2)
- 448 Did you ever wake up lonesome all by yourself
And the one you love off loving someone else (WILLH-2)
- 449 You ever wake up just about the break of day
With your arms around the pillow, where Mr. so-and-so used to lay (WILSL-3)

and found your dough-roller gone (AKER-3, line 3, r-formula)

This is one of the ten most frequent r-formulas: thuman is gone (see Appendix A). In one of its more common manifestations the formula is prefaced by the embedding element find, as the following list shows.

450 I got four feet to walk on; tail shake if it's all night long
Lord at daybreak call me baby; you'll find your bull-cow gone
(BIGB-13)

451 Did you ever wake up in the morning, and find your rider gone
I know just how it feels; that's why I composed this song
(GIBC-11)

452 I hate to turn over, and find my rider gone
Walked across my floor; Lordy how I moan (JEFB-39)

453 She stays out all night long
She's going to come home, and find me gone (MOSSB-1)

454 And I got up this morning; a light all in my room
And I looked behind me, and I found my faro gone (RACH-1)

455 He'll stay with you in the Winter, whilst your money is long
Come out in the Summer; you'll find your pig will be gone
(RAIN-27)

456 Now you will wake up in the morning, and find me gone
Because I'm a rambling man; I can't stay at one place long
(THOR-11)

Then you wring your hands (AKER-3, line 4, x-formula)

457 I wring my hands; baby and I want to scream
And I woke up; I found it was all a dream (JAMS-6)

458 I wrung my hands, and I wanted to scream
But when I woke up, I found it was only a dream (HITE-1)

and you cry the whole day long (AKER-3, line 4, r-position)

This line is unique, although it has obvious parallels with AKER-3, line 1, r-formula: and I cried the whole night long. Again, whether this is another manifestation of the all night long formula or not is problematical. It is interesting that there are ten occurrences of the all night long phrase in the corpus under analysis, whereas the substitution of day for night occurs only once.

And I told my woman (AKER-3, line 5, x-formula)

This is another manifestation of +human tell +human previously discussed under AKER-2, line 1, x-formula. If this particular manifestation is interpreted as +human tell +human/+femal/+loved one, then this phrase has the following analogues.

- 459 I woke up this morning about half past four
Told my girl, I couldn't use her no more (ANDE-1)
- 460 I told my wife, if you want me to wait
You better stop your sister from doing her *gait* (BAKW-1)
- 461 Says I told my baby about half past two
Wake up mama; loving ain't half through (FULB-12)
- 462 I told my mama, mama you don't know
Women in Shreveport kill me; why don't you let me go (LEDB-14)
- 463 Told my mama; fell on my knees
Crying oh Lordy mama will you forgive me please (LEDB-14)
- 464 Lord I told my old lady, no longer than a week before last
I told when I staying all night, long baby, mama it's done come
to pass (SHAD-7)
- 465 I told my old lady, so long *as poker* last
If I gets on Beale Street then mama, things will come to pass
(SHAD-16)
- 466 I told my gal, the week before last
I had to *take these canned beans* most too fast (STOV-3)
- 467 And I told my gal, the week before last
The gait she's carrying me is most too fast (STOV-3)
- 468 Yes I told my gal to bring me bail
Get some money if she have to sell a little coal (WILSW-2)

just before I left your town (AKER-3, line 5, r-formula)

This is one of the ten most common r-formulas: +human leave town, and its many variants are listed in Appendix C. Akers' manifestation of the formula itself is very common in the blues, but his use of the conjunction before to link this formula with the x-formula is unique

in the corpus under analysis.

Don't you let nobody tear your barrelhouse down (AKER-3, line 6, r-formula)

This is one manifestation of a formula which might be represented as +human tear down +juke joint, where the word down is always placed at the end of the phrase for rhyming purposes. The argument +juke joint generates the words barrelhouse, playhouse and gin house, in this corpus, as well as the term sugar barrel. This last term seems to be a euphemism which makes use of the juke joint image, rather than being a term for a juke joint itself.

469 Ain't going to marry; either settle down
I'm going to stay right here, till they tear this barrelhouse down
(BAIK-2)

470 The chief of police done tore my playhouse down
No use in grieving; I'm going to leave this town (JONM-10)

471 What you going to do, when they tear your barrelhouse down
Going to pack my suitcase; hunt some other town (JORC-5)

472 Way way down babe way down in old Pollock Town
Dirty roaches and the chinchies done tore my little ginhouse down
(KIDS-1)

473 Hey I believe I'll get drunk; tear this old barrelhouse down
Because I ain't got no money, but I can hobo out of town
(MEMM-29)

474 I said don't take my money; then try to dog me around
Because if you do, I'm going to tear your playhouse down
(ROLW-5)

475 Sugar man sugar man you got the best sugar in town
Please don't let some other woman tear your sugar barrel down
(SMIBM-3)

476 Way down way down way down in Pollock Town
There the ??? polices have teared my playhouse down
(WILLI-1)

477 I spent all my days down in Pollock Town
For womens and bad whiskey have torn my playhouse down
(WILLI-1)

And I fold my arms (AKER-3, line 7, x-formula)

- 478 I folded up my arms, and I slowly walked away
That's all right baby; you going to need my help some day
(DAVIW-8)
- 479 Mmm I fold my arms, and I walked away
That's all right mama; your troubles will come some day
(HOUS-2)
- 480 Hey I'm going to fold my arms; I'm going to kneel down in prayer
When I get up, I'm going to see if my preaching suit a man's ear
(HOUS-4)
- 481 Lord I fold my arms, and I walked away
Just like I tell you; somebody's got to pay
(HOUS-5)
- 482 Had to fold my arms, and I slowly walked away
I said in my mind, your trouble going to come some day
(JOHR-19)

and I begin to walk away (AKER-3, line 7, r-formula)

- Akers is unique in prefacing this formula with the PN_{emb} begin.
- 483 Oh captain captain what time of day
Oh he looked at me, and he walked away
(ALET-3)
- 484* Sooner or later one of us has got to walk away
She says I don't mind you going; but please don't go away to
stay
(ARNK-37)
- 485 Now listen here mama; treat me in a lowdown way
But if I get what I want mama, you'll see me walk away
(CHATB-10)
- 486 He looked at me and smiled, but yet they refused to say
I asked him again, and they turned and walked away (COXI-9)
- 487 I folded up my arms, and I slowly walked away
That's all right baby; you going to need my help some day.
(DAVIW-8)
- 488 Mmm I fold my arms, and I walked away
That's all right mama; your troubles will come some day
(HOUS-2)
- 489 Lord I fold my arms, and I walked away
Just like I tell you; somebody's got to pay
(HOUS-5)
- 490 I woke up this morning between midnight and day
I felt for my rider; she done walked away
(HOWE-2)

- 491 Had to fold my arms, and I slowly walked away
I said in my mind, your trouble going to come some day
(JOHR-19)
- 492 Ahhhh ha ha what's the matter with my man today
I ask him if he love me; Lord and he walked away (TUCB-2)
- 493 Is today the day that you walked away
Oh you told me you was going; you was going to stay (WILK-2)

I said that's all right sweet mama (AKER-3, line 8, x-formula)

This is a very common formula in the blues. The following are a few of the more than fifty examples of this formula in the corpus.

- 494 But I mean that's all right now baby; honey now that's all right
for you.
You got me here in all this lowdown trouble, baby and this lowdown
way that you do (CHATB-26)
- 495 That's all right mama; that's all right for you
Treat me lowdown and dirty; any old way you do (CRUD-3)
- 496 You's a cold-blooded murderer, when you want me out your way
Says that's all right mama; you going to need my help some day
(FULB-5)
- 497 That's all right baby; about how you run around
But you had to face sorrow, when Bob gets back in town
(HICR-22)
- 498 That's all right baby; *sorry* you drove me away
Well now you don't think ooo well well that you need my help some day
(HOGG-1)
- 499 And I'm going away now; I'm going away to stay
That'll be all right pretty mama; you going to need my help some
day (JAMS-2)
- 500 That's all right baby; Lord that's all right for you
Now it's all right baby; Lord about the way you do (KIDS-1)
- 501 That's all right baby; I won't leave you no more
For that creeping rattlesnake done crawled up to my door
(SHOR-2)
- 502 Says that's all right; I'll see you again (STOK-21)
- 503 Now mama that's all right; mama that's all right for you
I mean now that's all right now pretty mama; most any old way
you do (NASHL-2)

504 Daddy it's all right; how you turn me down
Mmmm, I ain't got a dime (WHIW-15)

505 Woman that will be all right; I know my baby ain't going to stay
away
Well now she forever stays on my mind; people she the only woman
I crave (WILLS-16)

your trouble's going to come some day (AKER-3, line 8, r-formula)

506 Mmm I fold my arms, and I walked away
That's all right mama; your troubles will come some day
 (HOUS-2)

507 Had to fold my arms, and I slowly walked away
I said in my mind, your trouble going to come some day
 (JOHR-19)

"JUMPIN' AND SHOUTIN' BLUES" (AKER-4)

Lord I know my baby sure going to jump and shout (AKER-4, line 1, x-formula)

This formula might be considered as two separate formulas: +human jump and +human shout. But as with the roll and tumble formula (AKER-3, line 1, x-formula), this phrase seems to be idiomatic. There are examples in which the verb jump is not included (510, 513, 515, and 519); but it might be argued that these phrases are members of another formula, since they do not conform to the structure of the idiom.

508 What you going to do mama, when your thing give out
I'm going to telephone you; we all* jump and shout
 (ALET-19)

509 Says I know my baby she sure going to jump and shout
When I get down to the bank, and draw my money out (BIGB-9)

510 Too tight; stepping out
Too tight; hear me shout (BLAK-30)

511 I know my baby I know my baby and she's bound to jump, and she's
bound to jump and shout
Now when she gets over to Atlanta; I I done rolled them few, I done
rolled them few days out (ESTE-26)

- 512 When I reach old Los Angeles California, you ought to hear me
jump and shout
 Now the people in Los Angeles, they don't know what it's all about.
 (HARD-1)
- 513 I'm going to preach these blues now, and I want everybody to shout
I'm going to do like a prisoner; I'm going to roll my time on out
 (HOUS-3)
- 514 I know my baby she's going to jump and shout
 When she gets a letter from Lemon, I wrote her two days out
 (JEFB-1)
- 515 I want to see I want to see the girl I'm *for painted* about
I be so glad, I sure can't help but shout
 (LEWF-4)
- 516 Drove so many piles, my hammer's all worn out
That's when I do my driving, they began to jump and shout
 (MCCOJ-10)
- 517 There'll be one of these mornings; you going to jump and shout
Open the jailhouse door, and you come walking out (MCCOJ-21)
- 518 I know my baby she going to jump and shout
When the train rolls up, and I come walking out (SLUE-2)
- 519 I saw the Baptist sister jump up, and began to shout
But I'm so glad that the whiskey vote is out (STOK-8)
- 520 Well when my baby come out and see me, I know she's going to jump
and shout
Well well well if that don't draw a crowd, ooo people going to
know what all this racket about (WILLS-6)

When the train get here (AKER-4, line 2, x-position)

This phrase is unique in the corpus, although it might well be considered one manifestation of a formula train move towards some place.

The two following examples are possible analogues.

- 521 Just as sure as the train come in San Antone; then ease up in the
yard
It's going to take two dollars and a quarter, I declare to send
me a postal card (JONL-9)
- 522 I went down to the railroad; I laid my head on the track
The train come along, and it broke my back (VINC-18)

I come a-rolling out (AKER-4, line 2, r-position)

This phrase is unique in the corpus, although examples 517 and 518 might be considered to contain analogues.

Lord I tell you it wasn't no need of mama trying to be so kind (AKER-4, line 3, r-formula)

This line is remarkable for the number of extraformulaic elements which Akers inserts into the formula: exclamatory (Lord), locutionary (I tell you), auxiliary, negation, and auxiliary (it wasn't no need of), vocatory (mama), embedding (trying to), and adverbial (so) elements.

The phrase I tell you, however, might be considered a formula in its own right. Other manifestations of the formula sometimes expand the argument: kind to nice and kind, loving and kind, or good and kind.

523 He's gone he's gone, and he's forever on my mind
And I want to see my man, because because he's so good and kind
(BOGL-20)

524 I tried to be nice and kind
Oh she was evil; would not change her mind (McCOJ-18)

525 When I first met you mama, you were so nice and kind
You done got reckless, and change your mind (McTW-17)

526 But I tried to be nice; tried to be nice and kind
But every man I love don't seem like he want to pay me no mind
(MAYM-40)

527 What's the use of trying I said trying trying to be kind
When the one you love haven't got you on his mind (SMIC-27)

528 Now listen at me mama; mama if you'll only be kind
I do everything mama to try to satisfy your mind (STOK-24)

529 I know he's good; I know he's nice and kind
Have a talk with him, before you start to buying (WILK-12)

530 Oh Ford ah she's gone she's gone; she's forever be on my mind
Now she was a sweet little woman; she just wouldn't be loving and kind
(WILLS-1)

Ah you know you don't love me (AKER-4, line 4, x-formula)

This is one of the ten most frequent x-formulas: human love + human.

(see Appendix A). There are, however, only a few examples of this formula which are both prefaced by the embedding element know and which include negation.

531 And you know you didn't love me; you fell across my bed
Full of your moonshine whiskey; mama talking all out of your head
(COLLC-1)

532 Said it's ~~mmm~~ baby ~~mmm~~ baby ~~mmm~~
Say you know you do not love me, like I say I love you
(ROLW-1)

533 Well I said look a-here woman; I ain't going to fool around with
you no more
I know you don't love me; you wild about Mr. so-and-so
(WILLS-3)

534 Lord my baby my baby she don't treat me good no more
Now I know the reason she don't love me, she's wild about Mr.
so-and-so
(WILLS-7)

535 Now fare you well; baby yes I'm going away
Well I know you didn't love me; now I'm going to find me some
other place to stay
(WILLS-16)

536 Now but I know you don't love me; baby you don't love me no more
I know the reason you don't love me woman, because you is crazy
about Mr. so-and-so
(WILLS-29)

you ain't got me on your mind (AKER-4, line 4, r-formula)

This is one of the ten most frequent r-formulas: some thing is on +human's mind (see Appendix A). This particular manifestation is quite common, wherein the some thing has the feature +human. The following list includes all those manifestations of the formula which have a +human feature in this slot.

537 Lord she went up the country, but she's on my mind (ALET-4)

538 I can't sleep no more; can't get her off my mind
Know I wants to see my baby, and only one more time
(BARE-9)

539 Black dog black dog you forever on my mind
If you only let me see my baby one more time
(BLAK-11)

540 Hey hey your daddy's feeling blue
I'm worried all the time; I can't keep you off my mind
(BLAK-11)

- 541 I met a gal; I couldn't get her off my mind
She passed me up; says she didn't like my kind (BLAK-31)
- 542 He's gone he's gone, and he's forever on my mind
And I want to see my man, because because he's so good and kind (BOGL-20)
- 543 Boo hoo I just can't keep from crying
I'm worried about my baby; she's on my mind (CAMG-1)
- 544 I lay down fast night with that gal all on my mind (COLLS-4)
- 545 I can hear my back door slamming; (seem like) I can hear a little
baby crying
Lord I wonder baby have you got me on your mind (DAVIN-21)
- 546 Blues ain't nothing; good man on your mind
Well it keep you worried, bother all the time (DICKT-2)
- 547 When you see me with my head hung down
I ain't got the blues, but another gal on my mind (DICKT-2)
- 548 Mmmm, black snake is so hard to find
I am worried about my mama; I can't keep her off my mind
(JEFB-58)
- 549 I think I will use ??? poison to get my brownie off my mind
This long distance moan about to worry me to death this time
(JEFB-67)
- 550 You can't give your sweet woman everything she want in one time
Well boys she get rambling in her brain; mmm some other man on her mind
(JOHR-21)
- 551 Oh babe you is on my mind
I hope to see you some of these days; you know I sure ain't lying
(MCL-23)
- 552 Girl I lay down dreaming; woman I woke up crying
Since my bird-dog fly away, poor girl is on my mind
(REEDW-1)
- 553 My man's on the ocean, bobbing up and down
He belongs to Uncle Sam, but he's always on my mind
(SMIC-26)
- 554 What's the use of trying I said trying trying to be kind
When the one you love haven't got you on his mind (SMIC-27)
- 555 Now a brownskin woman always on my mind
She keeps me troubled; worried all the time (STEV-3)
- 556 Now if you love me baby, I'll treat you good and kind
I will start being nice, and keep you on my mind (STOK-20)

- 557 I got a gal named Yola; she treats me nice and kind
I don't care what she do; Louise is on my mind (TEMP-5)
- 558 You know baby you know baby you always forever on my mind
(VINC-12)
- 559 If you have a woman, and she don't do kind
Pray to the good Lord to get her off your mind (VINC-13)
- 560 She's the onliest woman I ever loved; I can't get her off my mind
Now I may not find her in the next twenty years, ooo Lord but
I'll be forever trying (WASBS-27)
- 561 Yes I was walking down the street the other day; my Hattie on my mind
A woman walked with me baby to buy me one drink of shine
(WASHL-1)
- 562 It's getting so I can't sleep for dreaming, and I can't laugh for
crying
Because the man I love is forever on my mind (WATE-11)
- 563 Stay out all night long, babe now to keep you off my mind
Well now you keep me worried baby; honey now and bothered
all the time (WHEA-7)
- 564 Now you done got me so, I hate to see that evening sun go down
I wake up in the morning; peach orchard woman on my mind
(WILLK-4)
- 565 Oh Lord ah she's gone she's gone; she's forever be on my mind
Now she was a sweet little woman; she just wouldn't be loving and kind
(WILLS-1)
- 566 I had an evil-hearted woman; she mistreated me all the time
She went away and left me, but she's forever on my mind
(WOOD-1)

Mmmm you ain't got me on your mind (AKER-4, line 5, r-formula)

See AKER-4, line 4, r-formula.

And what is the need of baby trying to be so kind (AKER-4, line 6, r-formula).

See AKER-4, line 3, r-formula.

Mmmm tried to treat her right (AKER-4, line 7, r-formula)

This is one of the ten most frequent r-formulas: human treat human

right (see Appendix A). This formula, prefaced by the ^{PH}_{emb} try, is one common manifestation.

- 567 I often tell my honey, don't have to fight
The gal that gets you has got to try to treat you right (BUTLS-2)
- 568 My baby love me; tried to treat me right
Gives me her loving both day and night (CHATL-2)
- 569 Let me tell you mama what you said last night
Lay down on my bedside; try to treat me right (COLLS-2)
- 570 Well now I have a woman; I try to treat her right
Well now she will get drunk, ooo well well and fuss and fight
all night (HOGG-1)
- 571 Went out with you baby; trying to treat you right
I drinking whiskey woman, and drunk all night (McTW-35)
- 572 Folks I love my man; I kiss him morning noon and night
I wash his clothes and keep him clean, and try to treat him right (SMIB-5)
- 573 I brought my man here; tried to treat him right
Started fighting over a woman; stayed out every day and night (SMIC-27)
- 574 I tried hard all my life
But you wouldn't try to treat me right (WASBS-16)

But you started with another man (AKER-4, line 8, x-formula)

This phrase is unique in the corpus under analysis.

and stayed out every day and night (AKER-4, line 8, r-formula)

Some manifestations of this phrase include the words day and night, while others use only the rhyme-word night in the time adverbial.

- 575 When I had you baby, you wouldn't act right
You with your man honey, staying out every night (GILL-13)
- 576 You know you don't treat me right, when you stay out both day and night
And I must stop you now, because you got to consider somehow (JOHL0-3)
- 577 I brought my man here; tried to treat him right
Started fighting over a woman; stayed out every day and night (SMIC-27)

578 Honey allow me a-one more chance; I only will treat you right
 Honey Won't you allow me a-one more chance; I won't stay out all night
 (THOH-5)

579 I'm a real good woman, but my man don't treat me right
 He takes all my money, and stays out all night (WALLS-5)

580 Well the (next) woman I had, she do nothing but fuss and fight
Well now you know baby that will make a barrelhouse man ooo well
well stay out each and every night (WHEA-24)

Says I ain't going down this big road by myself (AKER-4, line 9, r-formula)

581 Lord then I ain't going down that big road by myself
 If I don't carry you mama, I'm going to carry somebody else
 (ARNK-15)

582 I can't go down that big road by myself
 If I can't carry you, I carry someone else (DELAN-1)

583 Crying I ain't going down this big road by myself
 If I don't carry you, going to carry somebody else (JOHTO-2)

584 Crying I ain't going down that dark road by myself
 Crying if I don't carry you, carry somebody else (LOFN-3)

585 Can't go down this dark road by myself
 I don't carry my rider, going to carry me someone's else
 (PATT-3)

586 I ain't going to travel this big road all by myself
 If I don't take my baby, I sure want to have nobody else
 (SPIV-1)

587 I ain't going down baby that long road by myself
 If I can't carry you baby, carry somebody else (WEAC-6)

If I can't get you mama (AKER-4, line 10, x-formula)

This is a manifestation of one of the ten most frequent x-formulas:
+human get/have +human (see Appendix A), where the second +human is
 usually a lover, or a potential lover, of the first +human. The present
 tense of the verb get implies an active hunt or chase, whereas the past
 tense got implies actual possession. The present tense form is the rarer
 of the two, and a list of examples using this tense follows.

588 Lord but you can't be (mine)(my baby), and someone else's too
There can no one get you baby, Lord until I get through
 (BRADT-4)

589 I often tell my honey, don't have a fight
The gal that gets you has got to try to treat you right
 (BUTLS-2)

590 How long now will I have to wait
Can I get you now; honey have to hesitate
 (COLLS-6)

591 Tell me how long does I have to wait
Can I get you now honey, or must I hesitate
 (HANK-7)

592 Tell me how long will I have to wait
Can I get you now, or must I hesitate
 (JACKJ-5)

593 Look a-here mama, just a word or two
Said I get you to let's go, too too
 (McTW-23)

594 Woke up this morning to get my tie
I can't get you woman, because you let me die
 (OWEM-2)

595 Women in Cairo will treat you (nice and)(kind of) strange
Get your rider, and take you off that thing
 (SPAUI-1)

596 When I get you mama, we going to move out on the outskirts of town
 Because I don't want nobody, ooo always hanging around
 (WASBS-8)

I'm going to get somebody else (AKER-4, line 10, r-formula)

This r-formula, which has obvious semantic links to the previous x-formula, also allows several different verbs and verb tenses to fill its predicate. Note the verb have and the verb find in the following examples. The sense of the verb find is a bit different from that of get or have, so that whether example 597 is actually a member of this formula is debatable.

597 Yeah locked up in jail, and I just can't help myself
 Yeah when I get out, I'm going to find me someone else
 (FULB-13)

598 You won't act right, when I tried to do right myself
 Now it's no no baby; I've got somebody else
 (GILL-10)

599 Baby what's the matter; why don't you be yourself
 If I didn't love you, I'd get somebody else
 (GRELI-11)

- 600 But you are so dull and rotten; you think everybody like yourself
 If I didn't love you, I'd get somebody else (GRELI-11)
- 601 Because I love you baby, and I want you for myself
 If I didn't love you, I would get somebody else (GRELI-11)
- 602 I've got a woman now, that I love better than I love myself
 She treats me so cold sometimes; I think she got somebody else
 (JOHLO-20)
- 603 Mmmm chained down in this dark cell by myself
 And my gal she skipped; guess she got somebody else (McTW-27)
- 604 Says I'm almost crazy, and I'm all here by myself
 All these women about to run my crazy; Lord she's got somebody else
 (McTW-31)
- 605 I'm black and I'm evil, and I did not make myself
 If my man don't have me, he won't have nobody else (MOOAL-1)

Mmmm what you want your babe to do (AKER-4, line 11, r-formula)

This is another manifestation of one of the ten most frequent r-formulas, previously discussed under AKER-1, line 1, r-formula. Here, the formula is prefaced by the embedding element want.

- 606 Oh babe don't mean your bull no good
 Why don't you rub your bull-cow and pet him; tell him what you want your bull, to do (BIGB-13)
- 607 Look a-here mama; what you want me to do
 I work all the time; bring my money home to you (BLAK-10)
- 608 Brownskin mama what in the world you want me to do
 You keep my poor heart aching; I'm blue through and through (BLAK-12)
- 609 Now look here man; what you want me to do
 Give you my stew meat and credit you too (BOGL-26)
- 610 I said Lord what you want me to do
 I took all my money, and I brought it home to you (BRADT-3)
- 611 Tell me cruel-hearted mama what you want your daddy to do
 I'd rather see you murder me baby, and to leave me too (COLEK-1)
- 612 Oh babe what you want poor me to do
 Driving a coal wagon babe; give all my money to you (DEAN-1)

- 613 Come and tell your papa, what you want me to do
Now just before I go from you (EDNJ-1)
- 614 Now what you want poor John to do
Lord I done everything; tried to get along with you (ESTE-8)
- 615 Vernita honey what do you want me to do
Now I've done everything; but I can't get along with you (ESTE-19)
- 616 Oh Alberta oh Alberta don't you hear me calling you
If Alberta hear you calling, what you want Alberta to do
(LEDB-7)
- 617 Baby what do you want (me)(your papa) to do
Beg borrow and steal; bring it all home to you (LEWF-3)
- 618 Look a-here look a-here; what you want me to do
Give you my jelly; then I die for you (MEMM-2)
- 619 Now papa what you want me to do
I did everything in this world, trying to get along with you (RUPO-1)
- 620 Now pretty papa what you want me to do
I did everything in this world, trying to get along with you (RUPO-2)
- 621 Hey baby what do you want your papa to do
Want me to beg rob and steal; bring it all home to you (SHAD-1)
- 622 Hey what do you want your man to do
Said I rob and steal, and make everything for you (STOK-3)
- 623 Hey hey what you want me to do
Johnny it with you, and eat those narrow-face too (WASBW-1)
- 624 Look a-here look a-here; what you want me to do
You knew my jelly didn't die for you (WIGG-3)
- 625 Now tell me baby; what you want me to do
Think I can love you, and be your dog too (WILLS-14)
- 626 Now tell me Red, what you want me to do
Now do you think I can love you, and be your little dog too (WILLS-22)
- 627 Now tell me babe, what do you want me to do
I did everything I could baby to try to get along with you (WILLS-36)

Says I know it's something (AKER-4, line 12, x-formula)

628 You show your linen to any man
And that's something mama, that I just can't stand (DAVIN-13)

629 Now there is something, you say that you expect
Now come and tell me what it is that I neglect (EDWJ-1)

630 You can't love me baby, and love my brother too
Because that's that's something; it will never do (HICR-18)

631 This is something, I never seen before
You broke down my bed; got a pallet on my floor (WASBS-7)

gal it ain't no use (AKER-4, line 12, r-formula)

632 I chew my bacca, and I spit my juice
I tried to love you so hard, but I found out there's no use (JOHLO-7)

633 Went to the henhouse; looked on the roof
Looking for my stuff, but it was no use (McCOJ-5)

634 Would go to bed, but it ain't no use
They pile up on the bed, like chickens on a roost (McTW-10)

The most striking feature of Akers' songs is that they are highly formulaic. Of the seventy-two phrases analyzed, sixty-two were shown to be manifestations of some formula and to have very close, if not identical analogues in the lyrics of other singers. This means that about eighty-nine percent of Akers' recorded repertoire is clearly formulaic. This percentage is very high, relative to the average formulaic content of the blues, which is roughly sixty-six percent.⁴

⁴ This figure is based on some rough calculations which I made while examining the print-out of the corpus. A count of those r-position phrases which appear two or more times in the corpus confirms this percentage, and I have every reason to believe that the x-position phrases would also be about two-thirds formulaic.

Akers is also rather conservative, if that is the proper word, in his choice of formulas; twenty-one of the sixty-two formulas which he used were among the twenty most common formulas in the blues. In other words, one third of the formulas in Akers' songs are the most common formulas in the repertoires of blues singers in general. Of the other two-thirds, many of the formulas are quite common, occurring more than thirty times each in the corpus under analysis.

What do these statistics mean? Certainly, Akers can be called a conservative, traditional composer of the blues. The fact that one of his four recorded songs is a copy from another recording, and that there is considerable repetition of formulas from one song to another, and even within each song, would seem to indicate that Akers was not a prolific composer. His talent may have lay in the reinterpretation of other singers' material, since he has clearly changed the tune of Newbern's song to fit his own unique style of performance. This is all pure speculation, however, and it may well be that in other performance contexts, Akers was not so conservative, traditional, or derivative.

Is it fair, however, to say that Akers was non-innovative? Innovation may take many forms, and Akers does show signs of originality in certain aspects of his lyrics. To start with, there are ten phrases in his lyrics for which there are no clear formulaic analogues in the corpus. This means one of two things: either these phrases are indeed formulaic, but the corpus under analysis is not representative enough to reveal this⁵; or these phrases were truly created out of Akers' mind.

⁵ "Any formulas which one claimed to be unique might be variants of systems which have not been collected: the theoretical possibility must be admitted."--Bruce A. Rosenberg, The Art of the American Folk Preacher (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1970), p. 104.

Of course, some of the ten may fall into the former category, while the others fall into the latter category. Theoretically, then, one might say that Akers is eleven percent innovative and eighty-nine percent non-innovative in terms of formulaic originality.

This last statistic, however, does not accurately reflect the innovative features of Akers' songs. Although it is true that he is highly formulaic, the ways in which he uses the traditional formulas of the blues are often very original. Akers is most innovative in his use of extraformulaic elements, especially the embedding element. For example, the prefacing of the formula make me love you with the PN_{emb} want (AKER-2, line 2), or the use of the PN_{emb} know with the formula you'll go, are found nowhere else in the corpus under analysis. His use of the extraformulaic elements in the line Lord I tell you it wasn't no need of mama trying to be so kind (AKER-4, line 8) is extremely innovative.

Akers' originality is also reflected in the innovative ways in which he juxtaposed formulas. If one discounts AKER-3, which is a direct copy of another song, eleven of Akers' seventeen stanzas are completely formulaic. This means that every phrase in these eleven stanzas has analogues in other singers' repertoires. In seven of these eleven stanzas, however, Akers' combinations of formulas is unique.

The best example of this type of inventiveness is the next to last stanza in AKER-4:

635 Says I ain't going down this big road by myself
If I can't get you mama, I'm going to get somebody else

Other singers have used the first line of this stanza in a very rigid, ossified structure, with the same x- and r-formulas filling all the positions in the couplet in almost every case. Kokomo Arnold's version

is typical:

636 Lord then I ain't going down that big road by myself
If I don't carry you mama, I'm going to carry somebody else
(ARNK-15)

This same pattern of x- and r-formulas is followed by six of the seven singers who make use of the big road formula. The one exception is Victoria Spivey, but her variation is not radically different from the others:

637 I ain't going to travel this big road by myself
If I don't take my baby, I sure want to have no one else
(SPIV-1)

Akers has varied the imagery considerably by the substitution of a get you formula for a carry you/take you formula in the x- and r-position of the second line, giving the stanza a more aggressive flavour. Given the general ossified nature of this standard blues stanza, Akers' change is both unexpected and original.

It is, therefore, a mistake to label Akers as non-innovative. His choice of formulas is not original, but his choice of extraformulaic elements and juxtapositions truly is. His inventiveness lies, not in the grosser aspects of blues composition, but in the more subtenuances of extra- and inter-formulaic structures. Whether this type of innovation was appreciated by blues audiences is another question, but the point to be made here is that there is more than one road to innovation within the structure of blues lyrics. The paradox of a formulaic system is that one may be both original and traditional at the same time.

Looking at Akers' songs as a whole, there is another possible reason for his lack of formulaic originality. His songs are typical of the blues in terms of their theme and the treatment of that theme. All four songs are concerned with one or another aspect of love. For the most part,

the songs deal with the troubles of love, especially abandonment or unfaithfulness. His treatment of these subjects is almost totally non-narrative, with little if any chronological sequence from one verse to the next. It is in just such a thematic context that the traditional formulas of the blues fit best.

Whenever the blues singer chooses to compose a song on one of the traditional themes of the blues--love, travel, whiskey, or hard times--he has an immediate and large storehouse of formulas at his disposal. This is quite logical, since patterned language will naturally accrue around those topics which are most often articulated. Lord recognized this same phenomenon in Yugoslavian epic poetry, when he wrote, "The most stable formulas will be those for the most common ideas of the poetry."⁶ This is certainly the basis of idiomatic speech. For example, a blues singer would be hard-pressed to compose a blues about squid-jigging, using traditional blues formulas, since this topic not only never arises in the blues, but is quite foreign to the way of life of most people within the singer's culture.

The use of traditional blues formulas is also more flexible if the song is non-narrative. A chronological sequence automatically limits the choice of formulas which can be used in any one section of the song, since the singer must worry about temporal logic and the progression of a narrative line. The singer is also much more restricted in his use of imagery and symbolism, if he must adhere to a set plot or an inflexible theme. Non-sequential thoughts on the nature of love or hard times

⁶ Albert B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales*, Harvard Studies in Comparative Literature, No. 24 (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1960), p. 34.

however, allows the singer maximum freedom in his choice and placement of traditional formulas, since one line or stanza need not bear any direct thematic or sequential relationship to any other line or stanza in a song. Because Akers' songs fit these criteria so well, they lend themselves to a very traditional formulaic construction.

By contrast, there are singers who compose narrative blues on topics which are rather unusual in blues contexts. One such singer is John Estes, who has composed a number of autobiographical blues. His song "Floating Bridge" (ESTE-21), for example, tells of the time he almost drowned in an auto accident. The song is highly narrative and its topic is not at all typical of the blues. In the following transcription, those phrases which are clearly formulaic have been underlined:

638 Now I never will forget that Floating bridge
Tell me five minutes time under water I was hid

When I was going down, I throwed up my hands
Please take me on dry land

Now they carried me in the house, and they laid me across the bank
About a gallon and a half of muddy water I had drank

They dried me off, and they laid me in the bed
Couldn't hear nothing, but muddy water running through my head

Now my mother often taught me, quit playing a bum
Go somewhere, settle down and make a crop

Now people standing on the bridge, screaming and crying
Lord have mercy, where we going (ESTE-21)

Note that much of this song is non-formulaic, and even those formulas which are used are used in strange ways. The phrase I throwed up my hands is usually a formula for "resignation," but Estes uses it to mean "help"; the formula laid me in the bed usually has sexual connotations, which are lacking in this context.

This application of formulaic theory has made clear many of the points raised in past chapters. In the process it has shown some of the features of one singer's recorded repertoire. It has also shown the many facets of innovation in blues composition. If this brief study were expanded, other aspects of Akers' blues could also be investigated: the role of dialect and folk speech upon his blues; his apparent influences, as well as those whom he influenced; or a comparison of his formulaic patternings with those of his companion, Joe Callicott. But such questions, interesting as they are, go beyond the purposes of this study, and must await future applications of blues formulaic theory.

XVI. SOME SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS AND OBSERVATIONS
CONCERNING THE BLUES FORMULA

Any good structural study should raise at least as many questions as it answers. In defining and describing the structure of a folkloric event, the analyst in effect reveals a new way of perceiving that event. New perceptions or viewpoints naturally lead to new and different questions. In this study, a new way of perceiving the structure of the blues has been outlined, and the implications of this new way of looking at the material go well beyond the scope of this dissertation. Some questions and observations, however, can be made in brief which will point to some possible applications of formulaic analysis.

WHAT ARE THE SOURCES OF THE BLUES FORMULA?

The question of the sources of the blues formula is two-fold: what are the origins of the traditional phrases used in the blues, and what are the individual singer's immediate sources and inspirations for his own compositions?

In answer to the first question, analogues to blues formulas may be found in a number of other folk and literary forms. Previously, it was shown that the line ashes to ashes; dust to dust probably had its roots in religious literature (p. 313). The same can be said of other lines and formulas in the blues. This is not surprising, considering the strong part which religion and the church played in Afro-American culture. Thus, the underlined phrases in the following two examples are clearly biblical:

1. Well now the first shall be the last, and the last shall be the first
Well now you know I was just sitting here thinking, ooo well well
which woman treats me the worst (WHEA=24)
2. Oh my mama told me, when I first left her door
Said be careful in your travelling son; you got to reap just what you sow (THOR-1)¹

Similarly, proverbs and sayings are also sometimes used as formulas by singers, since their concise, aphoristic qualities are well-suited to the equally concise and aphoristic nature of blues verse. The following two underlined phrases are clearly proverbial:

3. Says I never missed my water; not until my well went dry
Says I never missed sweet Annje; not until she said goodbye (ARNK-36)
4. You quit me mama, because you couldn't be my boss
But a rolling stone don't gather no moss (NICK-6)

and the following two examples seem to be traditional proverbial comparisons:

5. I was sitting in my kitchen, just a quiet as a lamb
I wasn't too quiet to hear my back door slam (MEMM-27)
6. Says some men you know they're straight; some crooked as a barrel of snakes
Some men don't like bun and biscuits; like the doggone flat batter cake (CHATB-21)

There are even a few examples of lyrics taken from nursery rhymes and folklore:

7. Little Boy Blue please come blow your horn
My baby she gone and left me; she left me all alone (LOCK-1)

¹ "But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first," (Mt. 19.30); and "for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," (Gal. 6.07). See John E. Ellison, comp., Nelson's Complete Concordance of the Revised Standard Version Bible (New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1957), p. 636 and p. 1568, respectively.

- 8 Said now Mary had a little lamb; I mean his fleece was white as
snow
Mary take that little lamb with her to most every place that she
go (SPRU-10)

These literary and folk analogues, however, make up only a small proportion of all the formulas and lines in the blues. Most of the language of the blues cannot be traced to any specific source, other than the everyday language of the blacks. This then is the true source of most blues formulas: the informal, idiomatic speech of blacks. It was stated earlier that except for rhyme, blues lyrics show few peculiarities which would separate it from normal speech patterns. In terms of lexis and syntax, the blues is not very different from non-sung speech; there is no special poetic language and no unusual sentence re-ordering in the blues. This means that everyday language lends itself perfectly well to blues-lyric composition, and that, therefore, the source of most blues formulas is informal conversational speech.

This theory, although intuitively plausible, is very difficult to prove. There are few examples of informal conversation which survive from the race record era; and those examples which do survive may not necessarily prove or disprove this theory. What is needed is a bit of conversation which has a "blues-like" topic. As stated in the preceding chapter, the more common themes of love, travel, whiskey, and hard times lend themselves more readily to formulaic expression than do other topics. A bit of preserved conversation which is on one of these common themes, then, might very well show the seeds of blues formulas.

Just such a bit of conversation is preserved in Charles S. Johnson's Shadow of the Plantation. One of his informants discusses her marriage in terms which would be quite appropriate to the theme of love in the blues.

In the following passage, possible analogues for blues formulas have been underlined, and corresponding formulas from blues songs are noted for each underlined phrase:

Tom Bright was my husband, but he fight me (a) so I just couldn't live with him (b). He treat me so bad (c). I didn't do nothing a-tall (d). I uster cook his breakfast (e) and he'd come home with a big stick and beat me (f). Said I didn't have no breakfast done. He drank but he wa'n't drunk (g) when he beat me. One time I went away to mamma's (h) and come back I found some woman in my house (i). When I come in (j) he got mad and went to cussin', so I packed up (k) and went back home (l).²

- (a) Wife and I just had a fight (McCOJ-20)
- (b) Lord if you don't live with me mama, you ain't going to live with nobody else (ARNK-31)
- (c) She don't have to treat me so bad, because she lives in Tennessee (McTN-31)
- (d) There's no need of you dogging me; mama I ain't done nothing to you (BLAK-16)
- (e) But she cooked my breakfast; brings it to my bed (TEMP-5)
- (f) I beat my girl with a single tree (THOH-9)
- (g) Because you see me staggering, daddy don't you think I'm drunk (MOOR-1)
- (h) So I went back to my mama; nothing else I can do (SYKR-8)
- (i) Says I sorry for you woman; another woman has taken your place (MOOAL-3)
- (j) When you come in, your rider she's out and gone (HOWE-2)
- (k) I packed my suitcase; Lord I started to the train (SHAD-3)
- (l) Said I'm going back home mama, and I'm going back there to stay (ARNK-11)

It seems probable, therefore, that the majority of blues formulas are derived from everyday speech, and often from those bits of speech

² Shadow of the Plantation (1934; rpt. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1966), p. 53.

which are metaphoric, aphoristic, or idiomatic. Kiparsky saw parallels between formulas and conversational idioms, and his point seems well taken for the blues.³ Indeed, proverbs, biblical quotations and other bits of folk speech are also a part of everyday conversation, and thus the "conversational" theory of the origins of blues formulas also holds for the few formulas which can be traced to specific literary or folk sources.

Does it follow, then, that individual singers were inspired by the conversation around them to create blues formulas? Willie Borum was previously quoted on this question, and he is worth quoting again:

It's working that gives me my ideas. I walk around the plant at night, when it's quiet, you know, and I can hear men talking. Some of them is crying that their wife has left them or that she isn't doing them right, and somebody else is saying that his girl's took up with somebody else. I hear all that and that's what I put into my blues. I come back here and write down the things, rhymed up, of course. I make the verses and things right when I'm still there walking around at the job.⁴

There is a difference, however, between finding thematic material in one's surroundings and finding formulaic material: Borum found themes for his blues in the conversations at his job, but where did he get the formulas with which to express these themes? For the most part, Borum, as well as the other blues singers, mined already-composed blues songs for their formulas. The songs of previous singers are the source of formulas for most blues singers. William R. Ferris found this to be true in his fieldwork studies:

For instance, when I asked James Thomas, a Leland singer, where he found his verses, he replied, "Well, you have to get verses out of

³ Paul Kiparsky, "Oral Poetry: Some Linguistic and Typological Considerations," in *Oral Literature and the Formula*, ed. Benjamin A. Stolz and Richard S. Shannon, III (Ann Arbor: Center for the Cooperation of Ancient and Modern Studies, Univ. of Michigan, 1976), pp. 73-125.

⁴ Samuel B. Charters, record notes to Bluesville 1048.

records. You can git a verse out of each record and make you a recording of your own." . . . Thus records are an important source of the formulaic verses, which can be "lifted" by a singer who prefers to insert the verse in one of his own blues tunes rather than imitate the recorded blues.⁵

Naturally, singers resort to outside sources as well. As discussed in Chapter IX (pp. 202-07), blues singers were well-acquainted with other song forms. Gospel songs and spirituals, ballads, country music, and white popular songs were all grist for the blues mill. But the easiest and most accessible source remained other blues songs; in the blues, phrases were already form-fitted into a pattern which the blues singer used, so that he didn't have to worry about strange syntax or lexis, or peculiar rhyme schemes, where were foreign to the blues lyrical structure.

It might be said that the first blues singer to use a particular formula created that formula out of the conversational idiom with which he was surrounded. All the singers who used this same formula, or who used different manifestations of this formula, derived it either directly or indirectly from that first singer. This theory is, of course, impossible to test; the search for the "ur-formula" would lead to the type of fruitless work typical of the more unimaginative historical-geographical scholars.

If singers were indeed inspired to use blues formulas by listening to other blues singers, was their use of formulas then a conscious process, or was it unconscious? This question, again, is impossible to answer with any certainty. Even asking the singers themselves may not reveal the answer, since, though they may be very conscious of the structural processes which occur in composing a blues, they may be completely unable to

⁵ "Records and the Delta Blues Tradition," Keystone Folklore Quarterly, 14 (1969), 161.

articulate these processes.

The most that can be said is that just as ordinary conversation is both an unconscious and a conscious process, so too is blues composition. If we were entirely conscious of every complex linguistic construction, of every minute process which went into creating the sentences we speak, we would probably be incapable of speech; just as if we had to think about every movement of every muscle before we could walk, we would probably be unable to take a step. Yet, we do become very conscious of the process of speech whenever we engage in speech play, such as puns, verbal dueling, mnemonics, and other highly creative uses of language.⁶

Sometimes it is quite clear that blues singers are conscious of the formulaic process. When a singer creates an innovative phrase, it is often structurally allied to an already existing formula, and it is clear that the singer had the already existing formula in mind when he created the innovative phrase. We saw such an example in the preceding chapter, wherein Akers created the phrase I'm going to mail it in the sky (AKER-2, line 5, r-position); it is obvious that he based this phrase upon the already existing formula I'm going to mail it in the air, since he used this very formula in the same song (AKER-2, line 3, r-formula).

Blues singers also engage in a type of speech play in which they make conscious variations in formula structures or formula-juxtapositions within a song. In the following example, the singer consciously varies each stanza around one constant formula. The fact that this is a conscious use of formulaic structure is even evident in the title of the song "The

⁶ The most recent compilation of studies in speech play may be found in Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, ed., Speech Play: Research and Resources for Studying Linguistic Creativity (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1976).

Blues Ain't Nothing But . . . ???," which outlines the type of formulaic speech play which the singer is performing:

- 9 Oh the blues ain't nothing, but a woman want to see her man
Because she wants some loving; you women will understand
- Oh the blues ain't nothing, but a lowdown heart disease
Because loving your man; he's so hard to please
- Oh the blues ain't nothing, but a woman loving a married man
Can't see him when she want to, got to see him when she can
- Oh the blues ain't nothing, but a good woman feeling bad
Always down-hearted blue disgusted and sad
- Oh the blues ain't nothing, but a feeling that will get you down
Falling out with your man; you feel like leaving town
(WHIG-3)

Each couplet consciously varies around the constant formula Oh the blues ain't nothing.

In most blues, however, such a clear case of conscious formula usage is not evident. Where the formula is highly aphoristic or proverbial, such as you got to reap what you sow, the singer might well be aware that such a phrase has been used before by other singers; but whether he would have the same awareness when he uses a more straight-forward, non-metaphoric phrase, such as I love my baby, is difficult to say. The source of blues formulas and their conscious or unconscious use by singers is truly one of the most difficult questions which can be asked about blues structure.

WHAT ARE THE FUNCTIONS OF THE FORMULAIC STRUCTURE IN THE BLUES?

Most formulaic work has been done on long, epic narrative poetry, whether Homeric, Slavic, or Anglo-Saxon. Such poems, especially when performed orally, require great feats of memory. It is quite obvious

that in such poetry the formula functions as a mnemonic device, an aid to the impromptu composition of narrative poems which may take several hours to tell. In these poetic contexts, the singer need only remember the theme or plot-outline of his story, since the formulaic system establishes, a priori, the poetic framework upon which the narrative is placed. The formula is a labour-saving device which enables the singer to recite his epic without relying on rote memorization.

Formulaic systems, however, also appear in short poems. O'Neil has studied the formulas of short Anglo-Saxon elegiac verse, and Ross has shown that short Gaelic poems are also formulaic.⁷ O'Neil rightly concluded that "formulaic structure is not a necessary function of length,"⁸ but it might also be argued that since these short poems are really a part of a tradition which included much longer epic narratives, their formulaic systems might be in some sense vestigial. Such cannot be said of blues lyrics. There is no long narrative poetry in black culture which is texturally the same as the blues.

It is obvious that the blues singer does not need formulas to help him memorize poetry which is usually no more than twenty lines in length; Garfield Akers' rote memorization of Newbern's song is proof of that. It is also clear that formulas in the blues are not vestigial, since epic blues narrative of Homeric proportions has never existed. What then is the function of formulas in the blues?

To answer this question, we must again look at the factor of innovation

⁷ Wayne A. O'Neil, "Oral-Formulaic Structure in Old English Elegiac Poetry," Diss. Univ. of Wisconsin 1960; and James Ross, "Formulaic Composition in Gaelic Oral Literature," Modern Philology, 57 (1959), 1-12, respectively.

⁸ O'Neil, p. 13.

and the function of formulas in relation to originality. According to Cawelti, all forms of expression contain both original and unoriginal elements:

... all culture products contain a mixture of two kinds of elements: conventions and inventions. Conventions are elements which are known to both the creator and his audience beforehand--they consist of things like favorite plots, stereotyped characters, accepted ideas, commonly known metaphors and other linguistic devices, etc. Inventions, on the other hand, are elements which are uniquely imagined by the creator, such as new kinds of characters, ideas, or linguistic forms. ... A formula is a conventional system for structuring cultural products.⁹

The blues formula, then, fulfills the conventional function in blues lyrics, whereas innovative phrases fulfill the invention function.

This answer, however, does little to explain why the blues should be so much more conventional than invention. It would seem that the reason for this is purely aesthetic: formulaic systems in some way fulfill an aesthetic function for the blues singer and his audience, which cannot be fulfilled by invention composition. Rosenberg writes to this point:

In traditional art there is no suspense and no surprise; one is satisfied aesthetically because of a sense of the logic and justness of procedure, the inherent dignity of it, and because of the fulfillment of traditional expectations.¹⁰

The formula in the blues certainly fulfills these aesthetic functions.

The traditional expectations of the blues audience are satisfied by the familiarity of the images and structures of blues lyrics, for they have heard them before in many other blues lyric contexts. Welding

⁹ John G. Cawelti, "The Concept of Formula in the Study of Popular Literature," *Journal of Popular Culture*, 3 (1969), 384-86. For a critique of Cawelti, see David N. Feldman, "Formalism and Popular Culture," *Journal of Popular Culture*, 9 (1975), 384/32-402/50.

¹⁰ Bruce A. Rosenberg, "Oral Sermons and Oral Narrative," in *Folklore: Performance and Communication*, ed. Dan Ben-Amos and Kenneth S. Goldstein (The Hague: Mouton, 1975), p. 93.

is one of the few writers to discuss this aspect of traditional blues composition:

The blues is most accurately seen as a music of re-composition. That is, the creative bluesman is the one who imaginatively handles traditional elements and who, by his realignment of commonplace elements, shocks us with the familiar. He makes the old newly meaningful for us. His art is more properly viewed as one of providing the listener with what critic Edmund Wilson described as "the shock of recognition," a pretty accurate description, I believe, of the process of re-shaping and re-focusing of traditional forms in which the blues artist engages.¹¹

This aesthetically pleasing "shock of recognition," however, must be tempered with innovation. Neither the blues audience nor the recording companies would stand for the same formulas placed in the same order in the same stanzaic pattern from one song to the next. Welding is correct in emphasizing the "re-shaping and re-focusing" of blues formulas, for it is in the infinite combinations and permutations of the hundreds of traditional formulas that blues innovation and invention is most often expressed.

This is essentially the idea of "old wine in new bottles," and it is one of the ways of perceiving innovation. In much of Western popular culture, innovation is perceived in terms of new linguistic forms and new themes; in the blues, innovation is perceived in terms of new combinations of recognized elements. Parry understood the function of formulaic systems in innovative poetry, and how, in this type of traditional poetic composition, there is no such thing as plagiarism:

I know only too well that this is sure to suggest the thought of plagiarism to those not familiar with oral poetry, but it must be

¹¹ Pete Welding, "Big Joe and Sonny Boy: The Shock of Recognition," record notes to Blues Classics BC-21. Welding is most likely referring to Edmund Wilson, ed., The Shock of Recognition: The Development of Literature in the United States Recorded by the Men Who Made It, 2nd ed. (New York: Farrar, Straus & Cudahy, 1955).

understood above all that plagiarism is not possible in traditional literature. One oral poet is better than another not because he has by himself found a more striking way of expressing his own thought but because he has been better able to make use of the tradition. He strives not to create a new ideal of poetry, but to achieve that which everyone knows to be the best.¹²

Where the structure of a poetic form is standardized by the use of formulas, plagiarism is impossible. The paradox, of course, is that although the singer is restricted by the relatively rigid formulaic system, he is still very much free to express his own individuality within this formulaic system. Again, inventiveness and innovation are perceived in different ways, depending upon one's culture or one's aesthetic. In reference to Middle English formulaic verse, Finlayson made this point:

... although formulaic composition limits the poet, it does not preclude individual creativity. The limitation imposed is one of theme and the restrictions are those of a discipline rather than a tyranny. "By employing formulaic techniques the poet is no more and no less restricted than one who works within the disciplines of the rhetorical arts."¹³

Because formulas function as a "shock of recognition," and because they are easily recognized and accepted phrases to the blues audience, they accrue meaning and significance which would not be possible in totally innovative phrases. Because formulas are recognized, whether consciously or unconsciously, from other blues contexts, they gather thematic and psychological associations around themselves, as a snowball gathers more and more snow as it rolls down a hill. With each new singing of a formula, the audience becomes aware of all its past lyrical contexts

¹² Milman Parry, "Studies in the Epic Technique of Oral Verse-Making. II. The Homeric Language as the Language of an Oral Poetry," Harvard Studies in Classical Philology, 43 (1932), rpt. in The Making of Homeric Verse: The Collected Papers of Milman Parry, ed. and trans. Adam Parry (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1971), p. 334.

¹³ John Finlayson, "Formulaic Technique in Morte Arthure," Anglia, 81 (1963), 388.

and of all the other formulas with which it was juxtaposed. The formula, therefore, gains meaning and significance beyond its immediate semantic components.

Greenfield recognized this interesting phenomenon in Old English poetry:

A highly stylized poetry like Anglo-Saxon, with its many formulas and presumably many verbal conventions, has certain advantages in comparison with a less traditional type of poetry. The most notable advantage is that the very traditions it employs lend extra-emotional meaning to individual words and phrases. That is, associations with other contexts using a similar formula will inevitably color a particular instance of a formula so that a whole host of overtones springs into action to support the aesthetic response.¹⁴

and Rosenberg, in discussing a particular sermon formula, also raises this point:

One can say with certainty that Brown has associated the formula "Same man" with particular events in the life of Jesus, and that this particular descriptive passage intuitively calls this formula, and its variants, out of Brown's word-board. In certain psycholinguistic situations the reverse may be true: the formula calls forth the theme.¹⁵

The formula then also functions to give the poetry certain psycholinguistic overtones through its different contextual associations. This is true as much of non-aphoristic formulas as of those which are already loaded with metaphoric, symbolic, or proverbial meaning: "Whether or not a given formula embodies an actual metaphor, it is nevertheless always imagistic, and appeals directly to the senses."¹⁶

The only blues scholar who has recognized this function of the blues formula is David Evans:

¹⁴ Stanley B. Greenfield, "The Formulaic Expression of the Theme of 'Exile' in Anglo-Saxon Poetry," *Speculum*, 30 (1955), 205.

¹⁵ Bruce A. Rosenberg, *The Art of the American Folk Preacher* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1970), p. 61.

¹⁶ Cedric H. Whitman, *Homer and the Homeric Tradition* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1958), p. 110.

If the lack of unity or novelty in the lyrics, taken by themselves, makes them seem monotonous to today's listener, this was not the case for either the Negro audiences of the time or for the performers themselves at country parties. Each verse or line could stand on its own having its own built-in response; the very familiarity of the phrases (and to some extent of the music) making them pleasantly easy to recognize and identify with.¹⁷

The function of the formula in the blues is aesthetic. It gives the audience a secure feeling, in that the pattern is recognizable. At the same time, it "shocks" the audience with ever new combinations of formulaic elements. And furthermore, the formulas are both pleasing and extra-significant to the audience because of their accumulated psycholinguistic overtones.¹⁸

DOES THE FORMULAIC SYSTEM ITSELF REFLECT THE SOCIAL CONTEXT IN WHICH THE BLUES WAS PERFORMED?

Sterling Brown has previously been quoted as writing, "There are so many Blues that any preconception might be proved about Negro life, as well as its opposite."¹⁹ Virtually every possible aspect of black life has been sung about in the blues, so that a sociological analysis of this song form becomes extremely difficult at the thematic level. Brown is correct; thematically, the blues is a hodge-podge of many social images, some of which are in complete conflict with each other:

If, for instance, one wishes to assess the role of whiskey in black culture by analyzing blues lyrics, one will find as many statements

¹⁷ Record notes to Origin Jazz Library OJL-17.

¹⁸ On the whole question of innovation and cultural aesthetics, see H. G. Barnett, Innovation: The Basis of Cultural Change (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1953).

¹⁹ "The Blues as Folk Poetry," in Folk-Say: A Regional Miscellany, ed B. A. Botkin (1930; rpt. New York: Johnson Reprint, 1970), p. 325.

which are critical of whiskey as statements which are in favour of it.

Note the following two examples:

- 10 If the river was whiskey, baby and I was a duck
I'd dive to the bottom, Lord and I'd never come up (LEWF-10)
- 11 Lord Lord whiskey is killing me
And why I can't stop drinking whiskey, Lord Lord I just can't
see (McPB-3)

Through a formulaic analysis, however, certain aspects of black society definitely take on special significance in blues lyrics. By studying the highly recurrent formulas in the blues, one learns which themes and sentiments are most frequently expressed in the lyrics. This quantitative analysis not only tells something about black society, but it also gives evidence as to the reasons for the popularity of the blues in black society.

Why were the blues so popular in the first four decades of this century? What was happening in black society that would account for the growth and popularity of this song form? It has been previously stated that the blues is a love lyric, but the theme of love alone would not necessarily make the blues popular in black society. There were many other song forms, both in black and white culture, which were about love. The answer to this question must lie in some underlying theme in the blues.

In the Appendices to this study, the twenty most frequently recurring formulas are discussed. If there is an underlying theme in the blues, it should become evident in these highly common formulas. The following is a list of these twenty formulas (or more accurately, one representation of the formulas); first the x-formulas (1-10) and then the r-formulas (11-20):

- 1 I have the blues
- 2 I come to some place
- 3 I go away from some place
- 4 I have a woman
- 5 I quit my woman
- 6 I love you
- 7 I tell you
- 8 I treat you good/bad
- 9 I woke up this morning
- 10 I am worried
- 11 I have the blues
- 12 I cry
- 13 What am I going to do
- 14 everywhere I go
- 15 I will be gone
- 16 I'm going back home
- 17 It won't be long
- 18 some thing is on my mind
- 19 I treat you right
- 20 I'm leaving town

Clearly, some of these formulas speak directly to the love-theme in the blues: 4 I have a woman, 5 I quit my woman, 6 I love you, 8 I treat you good/bad, and 19 I treat you right. The formula I tell you, though not overtly about love, also speaks to the main theme of the blues, in that it establishes a one-to-one personal mode of conversation in the blues which clearly reflects the love-theme. It gives an intimate tone to the blues which contrasts with the "come-all-ye" tone of ballads.²⁰

²⁰ I am indebted to Neil V. Rosenberg for this observation.

The x- and r-formulas I have the blues define the song genre itself.

The reasons for the high frequency of the other formulas, however, is not so easily explained, since they do not directly refer to love or to the song genre as a whole. It is these formulas which reflect the underlying theme of the blues. The largest proportion of them deal with some aspect of travel: 2 I come to some place, 3 I go away from some place, 14 everywhere I go, 15 I will be gone, 16 I'm going back home, and 20 I'm leaving town.

This travel motif very much reflects the state of black society in the first part of this century, for the out-migration of blacks from the rural South started in the late 1870's and reached its peak during the First World War.²¹ Although this migration is often thought of as being a northward movement, this is not entirely the case:

The migration of Negroes is ordinarily spoken of as a movement from South to North; but to state it in these terms is to state only a half-truth. Fundamentally it was a movement from country to city. In proportion to their size, the southern cities have received as substantial increases in their Negro population as have northern cities; but the increases of northern cities have been more spectacular by reason of the fact that before the movement began the Negro population of these cities was negligible, and because the trend has been toward industrial cities, a majority of which are found in the North.²²

²¹ Much of the information on black migration may be found in the following books: Robert B. Grant, The Black Man Comes to the City: A Documentary Account From the Great Migration to the Great Depression: 1915 to 1930 (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1972); George W. Groh, The Black Migration: The Journey to Urban America (New York: Weybright & Talley, 1972); Louise Venable Kennedy, The Negro Peasant Turns Cityward: Effects of Recent Migrations to Northern Cities, Studies in History, Economics, and Public Law, No. 329 (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1930); Emmett J. Scott, Negro Migration During the War 1920 (rpt. New York: Arno Press and The New York Times, 1969); Carter G. Woodson, A Century of Negro Migration (1918; rpt. New York: Russell & Russell, 1969); and I. J. Woolfer, Jr., Negro Problems in Cities (1928; rpt. New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969).

²² Woolfer, p. 26.

During the years when blues music was growing in popularity, then, black society in general was undergoing massive urbanization. The reasons for this urbanization are many: oppressive Jim Crow laws in the South, lack of proper educational opportunities, the exploitative share-cropping and plantation systems, low wages, lynchings, and other hardships of southern rural life. Certainly one large factor was the boll weevil infestation which began in 1892 and which ultimately caused an economic depression in the cotton-growing areas of the South.²³

From the turn of the century to the First World War, travelling was on the minds of blacks, and this is reflected in the high frequency of "travelling" formulas in the blues. If the theme of a particular song was love-troubles, there was a good chance that its underlying theme was movement: leaving town, going to some place, not having a place to go, going back home. Sterling Brown made this observation when he wrote, "Blues often express a wish to be somewhere else, a dislike for this hard-hearted town, this no-good place, this sun-down job . . ."²⁴ The importance of "movement" formulas in the blues is such that the formula go to some place is the most frequently recurring formula in the corpus under analysis.

How did this movement affect black society? Certainly, it was not just a movement from a rural to an urban environment; it was also a movement from a stable, familiar lifestyle to a strange and uncertain existence. If the harsh economic conditions at the turn of the century upset the

²³ Woodson, pp. 171-72.

²⁴ "Blues, Ballads and Social Songs," in 75 Years of Freedom: Commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of the Proclamation of the 13th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1940), p. 21.

security of rural black society, the move to an urban atmosphere must have been that much more unsettling. This change in lifestyle must have caused great anxiety; the feeling of rootlessness which must have accompanied the move to the city, the move from the farm to the factory, must have left a deep impression upon the black psyche.

The anxiety brought about by this state of flux is also reflected in the blues. Just as some of the twenty formulas listed above are concerned with love, and others are concerned with travel, the third group is very much concerned with anxiety and a sense of instability. Three of the formulas speak directly of an unsettled mind: 10 I am worried, 13 what am I going to do, and 18 some thing is on my mind. Another formula speaks of a reaction to this anxiety: 12 I cry.

The formula it won't be long shows yet another perspective on this anxiety. It emphasizes that change and disruption will come soon, that time is short, and that the "threat" of something new and perhaps unpleasant is just around the corner. Note the way this formula is used in the following example:

12. Some day you'll want me, and it won't be long
Then you'll be sorry, you ever done me wrong (SMIC-12)

Even though the singer is ostensibly talking about a love situation, the general feeling of anxiety over a change of state is a strong undertone-image in the couplet.

The most interesting of the "anxiety" formulas is I woke up this morning. By itself, it does not involve any anxiety at all, but, as used in the context of the blues couplet, it almost always points to some change of state. Although the formula denotes an "emergence from sleep," it connotes a "waking up" to a realization that there has been a change in

situation." Note the use of the formula in this example:

13 I woke up this morning feeling mighty sad
 Was the worst old feeling that I ever had. (WALLM-3)

This sudden realization of a new situation is almost always for the worse. Generally, the figurative "waking up" is from a situation in which one feels good or in which one is in a good and stable love relationship to a situation in which one feels bad or in which the love relationship has gone awry.

The strong identification of the adverbial element in the morning with the formula I woke up may also add to this feeling of anxiety and instability. Rosenberg points out that the formula in the morning has special connotations in black folk preaching: "'In the Morning' is a phrase which Lacy and others associate with Revelation, since the apocalypse is supposed to fall then."²⁵ The same audience that listened to the blues listened to folk preaching, and although the blues doesn't allude to that final change in situation, the apocalypse, its use of the symbol "morning" might not be entirely lost on the blues audience.

Although the main theme of the blues is love, then, its underlying theme is movement and the anxiety caused by this movement. It might be said that the theme of love is used as a vehicle for expressing the worries and fears which accompany an important change in lifestyle of a culture. Black audiences could identify with this underlying theme, even if they themselves had not moved to an urban environment. Even if they remained on the farm, they undoubtedly knew of someone who had moved away. The great migration of the blacks to the city, in this sense,

²⁵ Bruce A. Rosenberg, "Oral Sermons," p. 99. "Lacy" refers to Rosenberg's informant, preacher Rubin Lacy, who was also, at one time, a blues singer, and is represented in this study under the acronym LACY.

touched everyone in the culture.

It is no coincidence, then, that the blues gained its greatest popularity in the first decades of this century. The feeling of anxiety and instability which the lyric invoked meant more to the blacks of the 1920's and 1930's, who had undergone this great migration, than it would have meant to their parents and grandparents, whose lives had been relatively more stable and less changeable.²⁶ If these highly frequent formulas are any indication, the definition of blues includes more than just "problems in love relationships." It also includes "movement, flux, and anxiety."

The pervasiveness of these underlying themes in the blues could not have been ascertained from a purely thematic analysis, unless one searched through every lyric in the corpus, looking for the many manifestations of these themes. A formulaic analysis, however, shows clearly, through quantitative means, how pervasive these themes really are. In contrast, the themes of whiskey or poverty are of secondary importance. The formulaic analysis of the blues, therefore, can show how this lyric reflected the culture in which it was found, as well as why this particular song phenomenon should have occurred when it did.

DOES THE FORMULAIC STUDY OF THE BLUES HAVE ANY IMPLICATIONS FOR FORMULAIC SCHOLARSHIP IN GENERAL?

Certainly, any formulaic study, by its very existence, adds to the

²⁶ The only extended discussion of the relationship between the blues and migration occurs in Mike Rowe, *Chicago Breakdown* (New York and London: Drake Publishers, 1975), pp. 26-39, wherein Rowe uses population statistics to chart the growth of urban blues in Chicago.

general knowledge of the nature of formulaics. This study has demonstrated that yet another form of poetry may be called formulaic, and that, beyond that, a short, non-narrative form of poetry is formulaic. This study, however, also contributes to one of the major questions in formulaic study: what is the relationship between the formula and oral composition?

It has already been shown that the blues is as much aural and written as it is oral. Blues singers were for the most part literate and many of them wrote down and carefully prepared their lyrics before stepping in front of the recording microphone. And yet the blues has also been shown to be highly formulaic in its composition. In the case of the blues, therefore, there would seem to be very little relationship between orality and formulaic composition. Whether improvised on the spot, or carefully written down beforehand, the blues remains formulaic in its structure.

This finding contradicts those scholars who claim that a formulaic structure is proof of oral composition. Magoun, for example, saw an absolute correlation between the formula and orality: "Oral poetry, it may safely be said, is composed entirely of formulas, large and small, while lettered poetry is never formulaic . . ."²⁷ Albert Lord is equally adamant concerning the nature of Yugoslavian epic poetry:

... The two techniques [oral and written composition] are, I submit, contradictory and mutually exclusive. Once the oral technique is lost it is never regained. The written technique, on the other hand, is not compatible with the oral technique, and the two cannot possibly combine, to form another, a third, a "transitional" technique.²⁸

²⁷ Francis P. Magoun, Jr., "Oral-Formulaic Character of Anglo-Saxon Narrative Poetry," *Speculum*, 28 (1953), 447.

²⁸ Albert B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales*, Harvard Studies in Comparative

David Buchan makes the same claim for ballads.²⁹

Certainly this is not the case with the blues. Whether one can extend the findings in the blues to all formulaic poetry, and say absolutely that there is no correlation between formulas and oral composition in any kind of poetry is a matter of debate, but this study does add weight to the argument that literate poets also used formulas. The findings of this study can refute some general statements about formulaics, such as the following by Bruce A. Beattie: "The formula-density necessary to assume an orally-composed text seems, on the basis of previous studies, to be above fifty percent."³⁰ The blues is, on the average, two-thirds formulaic, despite its literate nature.

There are, of course, formula scholars who see no conflict between formulas and written literature. Benson makes his position quite clear:

When a poet can write in Latin and English simultaneously and yet use formulas--and the author of the *Phoenix* is not the only one to do so--then I think we must accept the fact that literate poets could quite easily write in formulaic style, and when such a poet writes so heavily formulaic a style as we find in the *Phoenix* I think we can reject any lingering suspicion that the relative percentages of formulas might be used to distinguish between oral and lettered productions.³¹

Literature, No. 24 (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1960), p. 129. In all fairness, Lord does modify his stand in his comments upon Ruth Finnegan, "What is Oral Literature Anyway? Comments in the Light of Some African and Other Comparative Material," in *Oral Literature and the Formula*, ed. Benjamin A. Stolz and Richard S. Shannon, III (Ann Arbor: Center for the Coordination of Ancient and Modern Studies, Univ. of Michigan, 1976), p. 175.

²⁹ *The Ballad and the Folk* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), pp. 145-65.

³⁰ "Oral-Traditional Composition in the Spanish *Romancero* of the Sixteenth Century," *Journal of the Folklore Institute*, 1 (1963), 99.

³¹ Larry D. Benson, "The Literary Character of Anglo-Saxon Formulaic Poetry," *PMLA*, 81 (1966), 336.

Schaar and Rogers make similar statements in regard to Old English poetry, and Holzapfel and Finnegan apply the same logic to the broader spectrum of oral poetry.³² What the present study contributes to this point of view is concrete evidence that written poetry can be formulaic. Since most formulaic scholars have studied dead traditions where there is little evidence as to the actual techniques of composition, their views are of necessity based upon speculation and theory. That the blues is a literate tradition and that it is also formulaic is incontestable.

A related argument concerning the orality of formulaic verse states that if a poetic form proves to be formulaic, it follows that songs in that tradition were not memorized verbatim. Certainly, this view would seem to hold for very long narrative epics, where rote memorization would be extremely difficult.³³ But does the same argument hold true for short poetic forms? Jones believes it does for Child ballads,³⁴ although his theory is refuted by Friedman.³⁵ The present study clearly shows that memorization does occur in short formulaic poetry. Akers' memorized ver-

³² Claes Schaar, "On a New Theory of Old English Poetic Diction," *Neophilologus*, 40 (1956), 301-05; H. L. Rogers, "The Crypto-Psychological Character of the Oral Formula," *English Studies*, 47 (1966), 89-102; Otto Holzapfel, "Homer--Nibelungenlied--Novalis: zur Diskussion um die Formelhaftigkeit epischer Dichtung," *Fabula*, 15 (1974), 34-46; and Ruth Finnegan, "What Is Oral Literature Anyway?" pp. 127-76, respectively.

³³ Finnegan, "What Is Oral Literature Anyway?" p. 151, believes that memorization is also a factor in long epics.

³⁴ James H. Jones, "Commonplace and Memorization in the Oral Tradition of the English and Scottish Popular Ballads," *Journal of American Folklore*, 74 (1961), 95-112.

³⁵ Albert B. Friedman, "The Formulaic Improvisation Theory of Ballad Tradition--A Counterstatement," *Journal of American Folklore*, 74 (1961), 113-15. For a more moderate, intermediate view, see J. Barre Toelken, "An Oral Canon for the Child Ballads: Construction and Application," *Journal of the Folklore Institute*, 4 (1967), 75-101.

sion of Newbern's song is but one of the many examples in the corpus under analysis. A blues song may be composed using formulas, but it may be memorized by the composer before actual oral presentation, and the same song may in turn be memorized by other performers who wish to add it to their repertoires.

This study, then, supports the view that formulaic composition is not tied to illiterate, oral composition, but is, in fact, a feature common to both oral and written poeties. It also upholds the contention that memorization of texts occurs, even if the texts are clearly formulaic. These conclusions support the theory, expressed earlier in this chapter, that the blues formula functions, not as an aid in composition, not as a substitute for carefully written and prepared texts, but as an aesthetic and psycholinguistic device which gives the blues its character.

SUMMARY

The structural analysis of blues lyrics clearly shows the great complexity of this song form. As an analyst, I was confronted at every turn with a complex of options and limitations which make up blues composition and performance.

There is no one simple context in which the blues was performed. The singer could choose to perform his blues at house parties, juke joints, community picnics, brothels, cabarets, circuses, stage shows, or on the street. He could also choose to perform his blues before a microphone in a recording studio. Each of these contexts open to blues performance affected that performance in a different way.

The recording context was no more "artificial" than any other. To the blues singer, and especially to the professional performer, it was just another way of making a living through his music. The special features of this context, however, had a great effect upon blues performance and composition. Being cut off from audience feedback, being unable to express his artistry in any visual manner, being limited to a two hundred second performance, and being constantly pressed by record company officials for innovative compositions, the blues singer was forced to become more self-reliant, articulate, and concise in his performance and more deliberate in his composition.

The texture, as well as the context, of the blues also presented the singer with considerable choice. Starting with the basic blues couplet, the singer could create hundreds of different stanzaic forms and combinations: repeating the first or second line one or more times, adding a refrain, or employing a number of stylistic devices. In addition, the

text of the blues song, though usually involving some aspect of love, could include any subject within the experience of the singer. Being an emotive rather than a narrative lyric, the blues was also free from the constraints of plot, theme, and chronology.

The internal structure of the blues was also highly flexible. The basic unit of the blues is the formula, but this formula is bounded by neither lexical, syntactical nor metrical demands. At the level of compositional competence, the formula is a generalized semantic predication which may generate many different surface manifestations on a continuum of meaning in actual blues performance. The singer's choice of surface manifestations gave him great freedom of expression within the formulaic system. Thus, there is a paradox of constraint and of freedom in blues composition; the singer worked within the constraints of formulaic structure, but his choice of formulaic manifestations was almost infinitely flexible.

Further choice was open to the singer in the extraformulaic structure of the lyric. The many different extraformulaic elements in the blues allowed the singer to embellish his formula and add different nuances to the meaning of the formulaic manifestation he had chosen. The choice of formula, line, and stanza juxtaposition opened up yet further choices to the singer, and, again, added an almost infinite degree of flexibility to his composition.

At every step, from composition to performance, there seems to have been a truly bewildering array of choices to be made. Yet, despite this great freedom and flexibility, the basic formulaic nature of the poetry is ever present and clearly discernible. So clear is the structure, that about two-thirds of any given blues song can be found to exist in the

lyrics of the other songs in the corpus under analysis. In the case of Garfield Akers, almost ninety percent of his lyrics are clearly formulaic.

Because the blues is paradoxically constrained and flexible at the same time, and because the blues formula is both a theoretical and a concrete construction, the rules of blues structure are correspondingly flexible and informal. As I have already written, the blues formula is not a "building block," for there are no sharp edges and hard surfaces to this basic unit. The structure of the blues is a very "human" structure, in that almost all the rules may be bent, if not broken, and there are exceptions to the norm at almost every stage of the analysis.

The apparent conflict between compositional competence and actual performance, between what is possible and what is probable, accounts for the informal and flexible nature of this structural analysis. I have not constructed a set of rules and procedures which would enable a computer to compose the blues. My purpose, rather, has been to show how the singer used formulas in the performance of his songs, and how he manipulated the options and limitations of blues structure to his own ends. The analysis of Garfield Akers' recorded repertoire was a demonstration of how the theoretical formulaic predications, possible within the rules of blues compositional competence, become the actual formulaic units of compositional performance. The analysis was also, however, a demonstration of how limited a sub-set of all possible formulaic manifestations actually occur when one moves one's focus from the examination of competence to that of performance.

The structure which I have described, then, is not a neat package. It is not "machine readable." The rules are elusive and unclear if one

attempts to apply them in a general way to the entire blues corpus; but in individual and specific studies of songs and singers, the same rules, descriptions, and definitions become quite apparent and useful.

An understanding of the formulaic structure of the blues allows one to listen to this song form in a new way. When I hear a blues song for the first time, I now notice which formulas the singer has chosen to express himself. I also notice how the singer has used extraformulaic elements and formulaic juxtapositions to sharpen the image of his message and to express his own individualistic style. New and innovative phrases stand out in the song, as do unique formulaic manifestations and interesting, innovative juxtapositions of formulas, lines, and stanzas. In addition, I notice the non-innovative parts of the song, which immediately place the singer within the larger tradition of the blues; influences and wide-spread stylistic devices, ossified lines and stanzas, and direct, memorized copying of other singers' material stand out in relief, once the formulaic structure of the blues is known.

From the broader perspective of formulaic poetry, I have shown that a formulaic structure in no way implies oral composition, nor is the formula simply a mnemonic device used in the impromptu telling of long epic narratives. The blues formula is just as present in the songs which were carefully written and rehearsed as it is in the more improvised blues. The formula is actually more prevalent in the non-narrative blues than in the more narrative ones. The formula, then, is a part of the aesthetic of the poetry. It is appreciated, either consciously or unconsciously, by the singer and his audience as the proper way of expressing oneself in the blues. The formula's associational and psycholinguistic features are of much greater importance than any mnemonic or purely construction-

al function which it might have.

From a purely heuristic standpoint, this study has been an experiment in interdisciplinary research. Folklore, linguistics, literary analysis, and computer science have been combined to form this dissertation. In the process, I have learned that linguistic theories and terminologies are extremely useful as descriptive tools in analyzing verbal folklore. As a folklorist, I could see, intuitively, what the structure of the blues was, but, through the field of linguistics, I found a way of articulating with clarity and precision my intuitions. Likewise, students of classical and medieval poetry have been in the forefront of formulaic scholarship, and I have gained much knowledge from their theories of formulaic structure.

The computer and the field of computer science have been indispensable to this study. I have learned that for a quantitative analysis of this kind, manual sorting is neither possible nor desirable. Not only does the computer reduce the amount of time one spends in menial sorting operations and other kinds of tiresome work, it also eliminates much of the subjectivity and unconscious prejudgment of the material which inevitably finds its way into this type of analysis. In addition, the computer enables one to visualize one's material in a way which would be otherwise impossible. The computer, then, is not a luxury for the folklorist, but a piece of scholarly technology which is as revolutionary in its way as was the introduction of the taperecorder and video-tape machine to folklore theory and methodology.

To say that this study is the "tip of the iceberg" may be trite, but nevertheless appropriate. I have attempted to describe one small and special use of human language, and language is the most complex and least

understood form of human creativity. Its complexity dwarfs that of the most intricate technological invention, yet there is no human being who is not an "expert" in its usage. The formulaic structure which I have outlined explains, to some extent, what it means to be an "expert" in the composition of the blues.

THE BLUES CORPUS UNDER ANALYSIS

The following list includes all the songs which were analyzed for formulaic content, whether they proved to contain formulas or not. This list is also a key to the acronyms and song numbers which accompany all lyrics quoted in this study. The list is alphabetical by acronym, which corresponds exactly to an alphabetical listing of the blues singers in the corpus. Thus, the acronym of the singer heads the list of that singer's songs. To the right of the acronym appears the name of the singer. Below the acronym, the singer's songs are listed with the following information, reading from left to right: 1) the song number, 2) the title of the song, 3) the matrix number, take number, and date of recording of the song, and 4) the reissue album from which the song was transcribed.

The song titles, matrix and take numbers, and recording dates have been taken from John Godrich and Robert M. W. Dixon, Blues and Gospel Records 1902-1942, rev. ed. (London: Storyville, 1969). Further information on these songs can be found in this book.

Where Godrich and Dixon list a song under a group of performers, such as the Memphis Jug Band, I have listed the song under its lead singer. Where the lead singer is not known, I have listed the song under the acronym UNKA, which stands for "unknown artists." In one instance, I listed the songs of the Birmingham Jug Band under Joe Williams (WILLJ), since, aurally, he seems to be the lead singer, although Godrich and Dixon do not list him as such.

The reissue albums have been abbreviated, and the list of abbreviations follows:

AH	Ace of Hearts
BC	Blues Classics
Bio	Biograph
Br	Brunswick
BYG	BYG
CC	Collector's Classics
Co	Columbia
Cor	Coral
Fly	Flyright/Flyright-Matchbox
Fwy	Folkways
Her	Herwin
His	Historical
Jo	Joker
Mam	Mamlish
Mel	Melodeon
Mil	Milestone
OJL	Origin Jazz Library
Pal	Paltram
RBF	RBF Records
RCA	RCA/RCA International (Camden)
Riv	Riverside
Rt	Roots
Say	Saydisc
Spi	Spivey
Sw	Swaggie
VJM	VJM
Yz	Yazoo/Belzona

AKER Garfield Akers

- | | | | |
|---|----------------------------|----------------------|--------|
| 1 | Cottonfield Blues--Part 1 | (M-201-)c.23/9/29 | OJL 2 |
| 2 | Cottonfield Blues--Part 2 | (M-202-)c.23/9/29 | OJL 2 |
| 3 | Dough Roller Blues | (MEM-776-)c.21/2/30 | OJL 11 |
| 4 | Jumpin' and Shoutin' Blues | (MEM-777-A)c.21/2/30 | OJL 8 |

ALET "Texas" Alexander

- | | | | |
|----|-----------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| 1 | Long Lonesome Day Blues | (81213-A)11/8/27 | Rt RL-315 |
| 2 | Corn-Bread Blues | (81223-A)12/8/27 | Rt RL-315 |
| 3 | Section Gang Blues | (81224-B)12/8/27 | Rt RL-312 |
| 4 | Levee Camp Moan Blues | (81225-B)12/8/27 | RBF RF-9 |
| 5 | Yellow Girl Blues | (400442-B)9/3/28 | Hls HLP-31 |
| 6 | No More Woman Blues | (400446-A)9/3/28 | Rt RL-312 |
| 7 | Sittin' on a Log | (400454-B)10/3/28 | Rt RL-312 |
| 8 | Work Ox Blues | (401330-A)15/11/28 | Sw S-1276 |
| 9 | The Risin' Sun | (401331-A)15/11/28 | Sw S-1276 |
| 10 | I Am Calling Blues | (401349-A)20/11/28 | Hls HLP-31 |
| 11 | Double Crossing Blues | (402639-B)15/6/29 | Yz L-1032 |
| 12 | Ninety-Eight Degree Blues | (402640-A)15/6/29 | Yz L-1004 |
| 13 | Water Bound Blues | (402642-A)15/6/29 | Rt RL-327 |
| 14 | Awful Moaning Blues--Part 1 | (402643-B)15/6/29 | Rt RL-327 |
| 15 | Awful Moaning Blues--Part 2 | (402644-B)15/6/29 | Rt RL-327 |
| 16 | When You Get to Thinking | (403359-B)27/11/29 | Fly LP-103 |
| 17 | Seen Better Days | (404112-B)9/6/30 | Rt RL-316 |
| 18 | Frost Texas Tornado Blues | (404117-B)9/6/30 | Rt RL-316 |
| 19 | Easy Rider Blues | (FW-1138)30/9/34 | Yz L-1018 |

AMOS Blind Joe Amos

- | | | | |
|---|-------------|-----------|--------|
| 1 | C & Q Blues | ()c.7/27 | OJL 17 |
|---|-------------|-----------|--------|

ANDE Anderson

- | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|------------------|-------------|
| 1 | Thirty-Eight and Plus | (16266-B)14/2/30 | Fwy FJ-2801 |
|---|-----------------------|------------------|-------------|

ANDEJ Jelly Roll Anderson

- | | | | |
|---|------------------|--------------------|------------|
| 1 | Free Woman Blues | (12718-B)c.19/4/27 | Rt RL-340 |
| 2 | I. C. Blues | (12722)c.19/4/27 | Hls HLP-22 |

ARNK Kokomo Arnold

- | | | | |
|---|---------------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| 1 | Rainy Night Blues | (59938-2)17/5/30 | Yz L-1012 |
| 2 | Milk Cow Blues | (C-9428-B)10/9/34 | BC 4 |
| 3 | Old Original Kokomo Blues | (C-9429-B)10/9/34 | BC 4 |
| 4 | Old Black Cat Blues | (C-9653-A)15/1/35 | CC 25 |
| 5 | Sissy Man Blues | (C-9654-A)15/1/35 | CC 25 |
| 6 | Front Door Blues | (C-9655-A)15/1/35 | BC 4 |
| 7 | Back Door Blues | (C-9656-A)15/1/35 | CC 25 |
| 8 | The Twelves | (C-9671-A)18/1/35 | Say SDR-163 |
| 9 | Stop Jar Blues | (C-9776-A)5/2/35 | Say SDR-163 |

ARNK (cont.)

10	Black Annie	(C-9777-A)5/2/35	Say SDR-163
11	Southern Railroad Blues	(C-9921-A)18/4/35	Say SDR-163
12	Busy Bootin'	(C-9923-A)18/4/35	Say SDR-163
13	Let Your Money Talk	(C-9924-A)18/4/35	BC 4
14	Policy Wheel Blues	(90158-A)15/7/35	CC 25
15	Stop Look and Listen	(90201-A)23/7/35	BC 4
16	Big Leg Mama	(90314-A)11/9/35	Say SDR-163
17	Milk Cow Blues--No. 4	(90316-A)11/9/35	CC 25
18	I'll Be Up Some Day	(60515-A)18/2/36	Say SDR-163
19	Shake That Thing	(90765-A)9/7/36	CC 25
20	Mister Charlie	(90958-A)24/10/36	CC 25
21	Long and Tall	(91070-A)12/1/37	CC 25
22	Salty Dog	(91071-A)12/1/37	Rt RL-318
23	Wild Water Blues	(91134-A)12/3/37	Cor CP-58
24	Laugh and Grin Blues	(91135-A)12/3/37	CC 25
25	Mean Old Twister	(91161-A)30/3/37	BC 4
26	Red Beans and Rice	(91162-A)30/3/37	BC 4
27	Set Down Gal	(91166-A)30/3/37	OJL 20
28	Big Ship Blues	(91167-A)30/3/37	Say SDR-163
29	Buddie Brown Blues	(91299-A)23/10/37	CC 25
30	Rocky Road Blues	(91300-A)23/10/37	CC 25
31	Head Cuttin' Blues	(91331-A)3/11/37	BC 4
32	Broke Man Blues	(91332-A)3/11/37	CC 25
33	Back on the Job	(91333-A)3/11/37	Say SDR-163
34	Your Ways and Actions	(67344-A)11/5/38	Say SDR-163
35	Tired of Runnin' from Door to Door	(67346-A)11/5/38	Say SDR-163
36	My Well Is Dry	(63748-A)11/5/38	CC 25
37	Midnight Blues	(63750-A)12/5/38	Say SDR-163
38	Bad Luck Blues	(63753-A)12/5/38	CC 25
39	Kid Man Blues	(63754-A)12/5/38	Say SDR-163

BAIK Kid Bailey

1	Mississippi Bottom Blues	(M-209/10)c.25/9/29	OJL 5
2	Rowdy Blues	(M-211)c.25/9/29	OJL 5

BAKW Willie Baker

1	Mama, Don't Rush Me Blues	(14666)9/1/29	Hls HLP-22
2	No No Blues	(14667)10/1/29	BC 5
3	Weak-Minded Blues	(14668)10/1/29	Yz L-1012
4	Bad Luck Moan	(14892)11/3/29	Rt RL-326
5	Crooked Woman Blues	(14894)11/3/29	Yz L-1012
6	Rag Baby	(14895-B)11/3/29	Her H-201
7	Weak-Minded Blues	(14896)11/3/29	Her H-201
8	Sweet Patunia Blues	(14897)11/3/29	Hls HLP-22

BARE Barefoot Bill

1	My Crime Blues	(149352-2)4/11/29	OJL 14
2	Sniggin' Blues	(149353-2)4/11/29	Yz L-1006

BARE (cont.)

3	Big Rock Jail	(149356-2)4/11/29	Rt RL-313
4	From Now On	(149357-2)4/11/29	OJL 14
5	I Don't Like That	(150301-1)19/4/30	Rt RL-325
6	She's Got a Nice Line	(150302-1)19/4/30	Rt RL-325
7	Squabblin' Blues	(150303-2)20/4/30	OJL 14
8	Barefoot Bill's Hard Luck Blues	(150304-2)20/4/30	Rt RL-325
9	One More Time	(150305-1)20/4/30	Rt RL-325
10	Bad Boy	(150306-2)20/4/30	CC 3

BARN Wiley Barner

1	My Gal Treats Me Mean	(GEX-803)c.15/8/27	OJL 14
2	If You Want a Good Woman--Get One Long and Tall	(GEX-804-A)c.15/8/27	Rt RL-313

BATT Will Batts

1	Country Woman	(13718-1)1/8/33	Rt RL-329
2	Highway No. 61 Blues	(13729-1)3/8/33	Yz L-1021

BAXJ Jim Baxter

1	Bamalong Blues	(39784-2)9/8/27	Rt RL-318
2	K. C. Railroad Blues	(39785-1)9/8/27	Rt RL-326

BEAM Lottie Beaman (Lottie Kimbrough)

1	Wayward Girl Blues	(14161-A)c.8/28	OJL 6
2	Rolling Log Blues	(14162)c.8/28	OJL 6
3	Goin' Away Blues	(14163-A)c.8/28	OJL 6
4	Going Away Blues	(KC-604-)11/29	Yz L-1018
5	Rollin' Log Blues	(KC-605-)11/29	Yz L-1018

BELA Anna Bell

1	Hopeless Blues	(171-A)c.9/28	Hls HLP-21
2	Every Woman Blues	(172-A)c.9/28	Hls HLP-21
3	Shake It, Black Bottom	(175-)c.9/28	Hls HLP-21
4	I Don't Care Who Gets What I Don't Want	(176-A)c.9/28	Hls HLP-21

BELE Ed Bell

1	Mamlish Blues	(4816-3)c.9/27	OJL 14
2	Bam Bone Blues	(4817-3)c.9/27	OJL 14
3	Mean Conductor Blues	(4820-1)c.9/27	Yz L-1006
4	Frisco Whistle Blues	(4822-1)c.9/27	OJL 14
5	Carry It Right Back Home	(151037-2)4/12/30	Rt RL-325
6	She's a Fool Gal	(151038-2)4/12/30	Rt RL-325

BENNW Will Bennett

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|---|-------------------|-----------------|-----------|
| 1 | Railroad Bill | (K-127-)c.9/29 | OJL 18 |
| 2 | Real Estate Blues | (K-128-)c.9/29 | Rt RL-334 |

BIGB Big Bill (Broonzy)

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|----|----------------------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| 1 | Down In the Basement Blues | (20922-1)c.10/28 | Yz L-1035 |
| 2 | Starvation Blues | (20923-2)c.10/28 | Yz L-1011 |
| 3 | Eagle Riding Papa | (9595-1)9/4/30 | Yz L-1011 |
| 4 | Grandma's Farm | (9600-1)9/4/30 | Yz L-1035 |
| 5 | Skoodle Do Do | (9601-2)9/4/30 | Yz L-1011 |
| 6 | I Can't Be Satisfied | (16569)2/5/30 | Yz L-1011 |
| 7 | Skoodle Do Do | (16573)2/5/30 | Yz L-1035 |
| 8 | Pussy Cat Blues | (10031-2)15/9/30 | Yz L-1035 |
| 9 | The Banker's Blues | (17281)19/11/30 | Yz L-1011 |
| 10 | Big Bill Blues | (18385)9/2/32 | Yz L-1035 |
| 11 | Mr. Conductor Man | (18392)9/2/32 | Yz L-1035 |
| 12 | Worrying You Off My Mind--Part 1 | (11606-2)29/3/32 | Yz L-1035 |
| 13 | Bull Cow Blues | (11610-2)29/3/32 | Yz L-1035 |
| 14 | How You Want It Done? | (11611-2)29/3/32 | Yz L-1011 |
| 15 | Long Tall Mama | (11617-1)30/3/32 | Yz L-1001 |
| 16 | Mississippi River Blues | (80395-1)23/3/34 | Yz L-1011 |
| 17 | C and A Blues | (C-1020-B)20/6/35 | Yz L-1035 |
| 18 | Keep Your Hands Off Her | (96230-1)31/10/35 | RBF RF-16 |
| 19 | Good Liquor Gonna Carry Me Down | (96232-1)31/10/35 | Yz L-1011 |
| 20 | Rustlin' Man | (C-890-3)9/12/35 | Rt RL-316 |
| 21 | I've Got to Dig You | (WC-3034-A)17/4/40 | RBF RF-16 |
| 22 | When I Had Money | (WC-3036-A)17/4/40 | RBF RF-16 |
| 23 | Key to the Highway | (C-3745-1)2/5/41 | RBF RF-1 |

BIRB Billy Bird

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|---|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| 1 | Mill Man Blues | (147323-2)29/10/28 | Yz L-1016 |
| 2 | Alabama Blues--Part 1 | (147325-1)29/10/28 | His HLP-5 |
| 3 | Alabama Blues--Part 2 | (147326-1)29/10/28 | His HLP-5 |

BIRD John Bird

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|---|---------------|------------------|-----------|
| 1 | Gas Man Blues | (15396-A)29/7/29 | Yz L-1009 |
|---|---------------|------------------|-----------|

BLAAB Black Boy Shine (Harold Holiday)

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|---|-----------------|---------------------|------|
| 1 | Sugarland Blues | (SA-2551-1)20/11/36 | BC 7 |
|---|-----------------|---------------------|------|

BLAAI Black Ivory King (Dave Alexander)

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|---|-----------------|------------------|------|
| 1 | The Flying Crow | (61795-A)15/2/37 | BC 5 |
|---|-----------------|------------------|------|

BLAAL Lewis Black

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|---|-------------------|--------------------|------------|
| 1 | Rock Island Blues | (145361-3)10/12/27 | His HLP-5 |
| 2 | Gravel Camp Blues | (145366-2)10/12/27 | Fly LP-103 |
| 3 | Corn Liquor Blues | (145367-2)10/12/27 | Rt RL-327 |

BLACM--Tewee Blackman

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|---|---------------------------------------|------------------|-------------|
| 1 | K. C. Moan | (56346-1)4/10/29 | Rt RL-337 |
| 2 | K. C. Moan | (56346-2)4/10/29 | Fwy FA-2953 |
| 3 | I Whipped My Woman with a Single Tree | (56347-2)4/10/29 | Rt RL-311 |

BLACM Francis "Scrapper" Blackwell

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|----|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| 1 | Kokomo Blues | (IND-624-)c.6/28 | Yz L-1019 |
| 2 | Penal Farm Blues | (IND-625-)c.6/28 | Yz L-1019 |
| 3 | Trouble Blues--Part 1 | (C-2229-)c.17/8/28 | Yz L-1019 |
| 4 | Trouble Blues--Part 2 | (C-2230-)c.17/8/28 | Yz L-1019 |
| 5 | Rambling Blues | (18216)24/11/31 | BC 6 |
| 6 | Blue Day Blues | (18217-A)24/11/31 | Yz L-1019 |
| 7 | Down South Blues | (18218)24/11/31 | Yz L-1019 |
| 8 | Hard Time Blues | (18220)24/11/31 | Yz L-1019 |
| 9 | Back Door Blues | (18221)24/11/31 | Yz L-1019 |
| 10 | No Good Woman Blues | (90082-A)7/7/35 | Cor CP-58 |

BLAK Blind Blake

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|----|---|------------------|---------------|
| 1 | Early Morning Blues | (3057-1)c.9/26 | Bio BLP-12031 |
| 2 | Early Morning Blues | (3057-2)c.9/26 | Bio BLP-12037 |
| 3 | Too Tight | (3059-2)c.9/26 | Bio BLP-12031 |
| 4 | Blake's Worried Blues | (3060-2)c.9/26 | Bio BLP-12023 |
| 5 | Come On Boys Let's Do that Messin' Around | (3061-2)c.9/26 | Bio BLP-12003 |
| 6 | Tampa Bound | (3062-2)c.9/26 | Bio BLP-12023 |
| 7 | Stonewall Street Blues | (3081-1)c.10/26 | Bio BLP-12031 |
| 8 | Black Dog Blues | (12464-1)c.4/27 | Bio BLP-12003 |
| 9 | One Time Blues | (4363-2)c.4/27 | Bio BLP-12037 |
| 10 | Bad Feeling Blues | (4443-1)c.5/27 | Bio BLP-12003 |
| 11 | Hey Hey Daddy Blues | (20801-1)c.10/27 | Bio BLP-12003 |
| 12 | Brownskin Mama Blues | (20106-2)c.10/27 | Bio BLP-12003 |
| 13 | Hard Road Blues | (20107-2)c.10/27 | Bio BLP-12031 |
| 14 | You Gonna Quit Me Blues | (20110-1)c.10/27 | Yz L-1016 |
| 15 | Wabash Rag | (20154-2)c.11/27 | Yz L-1016 |
| 16 | Doggin' Me Mama Blues | (20517-3)c.4/28 | Bio BLP-12037 |
| 17 | Goodbye Mama Moan | (20541-1)c.5/28 | Bio BLP-12037 |
| 18 | No Dough Blues | (20559-1)c.5/28 | Bio BLP-12031 |
| 19 | Bootleg Rum Dum Blues | (20566-1)c.5/28 | Bio BLP-12003 |
| 20 | Panther Squall Blues | (20582-2)c.5/28 | Yz L-1016 |
| 21 | Walkin' Across the Country | (20868-2)c.9/28 | Bio BLP-12031 |
| 22 | Search Warrant Blues | (20871-3)c.9/28 | Bio BLP-12023 |
| 23 | Notoriety Woman Blues | (20875-2)c.9/28 | Bio BLP-12031 |
| 24 | Low Down Loving Gal | (20887-5)c.9/28 | Bio BLP-12003 |
| 25 | Poker Woman Blues | (15248-A)20/6/29 | Bio BLP-12023 |
| 26 | Doing a Stretch | (15249-A)20/6/29 | Bio BLP-12023 |
| 27 | Fightin' the Jug | (15250)20/6/29 | Bio BLP-12037 |
| 28 | Hookworm Blues | (15251-A)20/6/29 | Bio BLP-12031 |
| 29 | Diddie Wa Diddie | (15459-A)17/8/29 | Mei MLP-7324 |
| 30 | Too Tight Blues No. 2 | (15460)17/8/29 | Bio BLP-12037 |
| 31 | Police Dog Blues | (15463)17/8/29 | Yz L-1012 |

BLAK-(cont.)

32	Georgia Bound	(15466-1)7/8/29	Bio BLP-12037
33	Playing Policy Blues	(L-647-1)c.12/30	Bio BLP-12003
34	Righteous Blues	(L-648-1)c.12/30	Bio BLP-12003
35	Rope Stretchin' Blues--Part 1	(L-1099-2)c.10/31	Bio BLP-12037
36	Rope Stretchin' Blues--Part 2	(L-1101-2)c.10/31	Bio BLP-12037
37	Depression's Gone From Me Blues	(L-1476-2)c.6/32	Bio BLP-12023
BLIN Blind Norris			
1	Sundown Blues	(61850-A)18/2/37	BC 6
BLIP Blind Percy and His Blind Band			
1	Coal River Blues	(20138-2)c.10/27	Yz L-1010
2	Fourteenth Street Blues	(20180-2)c.11/27	Rt RL-327
BOGL Lucille Bogan			
1	Sweet Patunia	(4309-1)c.3/27	Yz L-1017
2	Levee Blues	(4324-1)c.3/27	Yz L-1017
3	Jim Tampa Blues	(4672-2)c.7/27	Yz L-1017
4	Coffee Grindin' Blues	(C-3461-1)10/5/29	Hls HLP-15
5	Pot Hound Blues	(C-3462-1)10/5/29	Hls HLP-15
6	My Georgia Grind	(C-5347-1)c.1/2/30	Rt RL-317
7	They Ain't Walking No More	(C-5549-1)3/30	Yz L-1017
8	Sloppy Drunk Blues	(C-5562-A)3/30	Rt RL-317
9	Alley Boogie	(C-5563-A)3/30	Rt RL-317
10	Black Angel Blues	(C-6847-A)12/30	Hls HLP-15
11	Tricks Ain't Working No More	(C-6848-A)12/30	Hls HLP-15
12	T N & O Blues	(13549-1)17/7/33	Rt RL-317
13	Baking Powder Blues	(13569-1)17/7/33	Yz L-1017
14	You Got to Die Some Day	(15477-2)30/7/34	Rt RL-317
15	Lonesome Midnight Blues	(15478-2)30/7/34	Rt RL-317
16	My Man Is Boogan Me	(15487-2)31/7/34	Rt RL-317
17	Pig Iron Sally	(15490-2)31/7/34	Rt RL-317
18	I Hate That Train Called the M. and O.	(15491-1)31/7/34	OJL 6
19	Tired as I Can Be	(15505-1)1/8/34	Hls HLP-4
20	Sweet Man, Sweet Man	(15506-2)1/8/34	Rt RL-317
21	Reckless Woman	(15507-2)1/8/34	Hls HLP-4
22	Down in Boogie Alley	(15508-2)1/8/34	Rt RL-317
23	Barbeque Bess	(16984-1)6/3/35	Yz L-1017
24	Jump Steady Daddy	(16993-2)7/3/35	Yz L-1017
25	Man Stealer Blues	(16997-2)7/3/35	Rt RL-317
26	Stew Meat Blues	(17013-1)8/3/35	Rt RL-317
27	Skin Game Blues	(17014-1)8/3/35	Rt RL-317
BOND Son Bonds			
1	Weary Worried Blues	(C-9403-A)6/9/34	RBF RF-9
2	Black Gal Swing	(064918-1)24/9/41	BC 7
3	80 Highway Blues	(064921-1)24/9/41	BC 7

BOYG Georgia Boyd

1 Meyer Mind Blues (76835-1) 2/8/33 Yz L-1030

BRAC Ishman Bracey

1 Saturday Blues (41842-1) 4/2/28 OJL 8
 2 Left Alone Blues (41843-2) 4/2/28 Rt RL-330
 3 Leavin' Town Blues (45458-?) 31/8/28 Rt RL-330
 4 My Brown Mamma Blues (45459-?) 31/8/28 Rt RL-330
 5 Trouble-Hearted Blues (45460-1) 31/8/28 Yz L-1007
 6 Trouble-Hearted Blues (45460-2) 31/8/28 Rt RL-330
 7 The Four Day Blues (45461-2) 31/8/28 Yz L-1007
 8 Woman Woman Blues (L-239-2) c. 3/30 OJL 2
 9 Suitcase Full of Blues (L-240-1) c. 3/30 Her H-201
 10 Bust Up Blues (L-241-2) c. 3/30 Her H-205
 11 Pay Me No Mind (L-242-2) c. 3/30 Yz L-1007

BRACH Mississippi Bracey

1 You Scolded Me and Drove Me from
Your Door (404764-B) 17/12/30 OJL 17
 2 Cherry Ball (404765-B) 17/12/30 Yz L-1038
 3 Stered Gal (404766-B) 17/12/30 Yz L-1038
 4 I'll Overcome Someday (404767-B) 17/12/30 OJL 17

BRADT Tommie Bradley

1 Adam and Eve (17084) 27/9/30 OJL 19
 2 Pack Up Your Trunk Blues (17206) 27/10/30 Yz L-1019
 3 Please Don't Act That Way (17884) 17/7/31 Mam S-3802
 4 Four Day Blues (17886-A) 17/7/31 OJL 19
 5 Window Pane Blues (18326) 16/1/32 BC 5

BRAS Frank Brasswell

1 Guitar Rag (16580-A) 2/3/30 Yz L-1035

BROWB Bessie Brown

1 Nobody But My Baby Is Getting My
Love (6813-?) c. 9/26 VJM VLP-40

BROWI 'Ri' Henry Brown

1 Titanic Blues (11476-A) 14/3/32 Yz L-1030
 2 Preacher Blues (11477-A) 14/3/32 Yz L-1030
 3 Nut Factory Blues (11506-A) 17/3/32 Yz L-1003
 4 Skin Man (11509-A) 17/2/32 Yz L-1003

BROWR Richard ("Rabbit") Brown

1 James Alley Blues (38000-1) 11/3/27 Yz L-1032

BROW. Willie Brown

- 1 M and O Blues (L-413-2)28/5/30 OJL 5
 2 Future Blues (L-418-2)28/5/30 OJL 5

BRYL. Laura Bryant

- 1 Dentist Chair Blues--Part 1 (322-A)c.1/29 His HLP-21
 2 Dentist Chair Blues--Part 2 (323-A)c.1/29 His NLP-21

BUNN. Teddy Bunn

- 1 It's Sweet Like So (59739-1)7/4/30 His HLP-5
 2 Patten' Dat Cat (59740-1)7/4/30 His HLP-5

BURS. Charlie Burse

- 1 A Black Woman Is Like a Black Snake (947010-2)11/9/28 Rt RL-322
 2 Tappin' That Thing (18648)3/8/32 Rt RL-307
 3 I Got Good Taters (18650)3/8/32 Rt RL-337
 4 Boogie Bum Bum (C-792-1)7/11/34 Jo SM-3104

BUTLS. Sam Butler (Bo Heavil Jackson)

- 1 Some Scream High Yellow (2677-2)c.9/26 Yz L-1016
 2 You Can't Keep No Brown (2678-2)c.9/26 Yz L-1026
 3 Poor Boy Blues ()c.9/26 Yz L-1016
 4 Jefferson County Blues ()c.9/26 Yz L-1016

BYRD. John Byrd

- 1 Billy Goat Blues (L-289-2)c.4/30 Yz L-1001
 2 Old Timbrook Blues (L-291-1)c.4/30 OJL 8

CALI. Joe Calicott

- 1 Fare Thee Well Blues (MEM-778-)c.21/2/30 OJL 11
 2 Traveling Mama Blues (MEM-779-)c.21/2/30 Yz L-1009

CALL. Blanche Calloway

- 1 Lazy Woman's Blues (9458-A)9/11/25 CC 32
 2 Lonesome Lovesick (9459-A)9/11/25 CC 32

CAMP. Bob Campbell

- 1 Dice's Blues (15483-1)30/7/34 Rt RL-340
 2 Shotgun Blues (15484-2)30/7/34 Rt RL-340
 3 Starvation Farm Blues (15503-2)1/8/34 Fly LP-103

CAMC. Charlie Campbell

- 1 Goin' Away Blues (B-32-2)25/3/37 Fly LP-103

CAMG Gene Campbell

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|---|-----------------------------|------------------|-----------|
| 1 | Wandering Blues | (C-5701-A)c.5/30 | His HLP-2 |
| 2 | 'Robbin' and Stealin' Blues | (C-5704-B)c.5/30 | His HLP-2 |

CANN Gus Cannon

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|---|-------------------------------|---------------------|-------------|
| 1 | Poor Boy, Long Ways From Home | (20144-2)c.11/27 | Yz L-1002 |
| 2 | Heart Breakin' Blues | (47001-2)9/9/28 | OJL 4 |
| 3 | Feather Bed | (47002-2)9/9/28 | Fwy FA-2953 |
| 4 | Last Chance Blues | (C-4337-)c.12/9/29 | His HLP-15 |

CARRL Leroy Carr

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|----|-------------------------------------|---------------------|------------|
| 1 | Naptown Blues | (C-3627-)17/6/29 | Yz L-1036 |
| 2 | Gettin' All Wet | (C-4034-)13/8/29 | Yz L-1036 |
| 3 | Papa Wants a Cookie | (C-5070-)2/1/30 | Yz L-1036 |
| 4 | Memphis Town | (C-5071-)2/1/30 | Yz L-1036 |
| 5 | Sloppy Drunk Blues | (C-6086-B)19/9/30 | Yz L-1015 |
| 6 | Four Day Rider | (C-6090-A)19/9/30 | Yz L-1036 |
| 7 | Alabama Woman Blues | (C-6091-B)19/9/30 | RBF RF-1 |
| 8 | Low Down Dog Blues | (C-7215-A)c.20/1/31 | Yz L-1036 |
| 9 | New How Long How Long Blues--Part 2 | (C-7221-A)c.20/1/31 | RBF RF-202 |
| 10 | What More Can I Do? | (C-7222-A)c.20/1/31 | Yz L-1036 |
| 11 | Papa Wants to Knock a Jug | (C-7223-A)c.20/1/31 | Yz L-1036 |
| 12 | I Keep the Blues | (11497-A)15/3/32 | Yz L-1036 |
| 13 | Midnight Hour Blues | (11499-A)16/3/32 | Co C-30496 |
| 14 | Mean Mistreater Mama | (SL-1-?)20/2/34 | Co C-30496 |
| 15 | Hurry Down Sunshine | (SL-4-3)20/2/34 | Co C-30496 |
| 16 | Corn Licker Blues | (SL-5-3)20/2/34 | Co C-30496 |
| 17 | Hold Them Puppies | (SL-6-3)20/2/34 | Yz L-1036 |
| 18 | Shady Lane Blues | (SL-7-3)20/2/34 | Co C-30496 |
| 19 | Blues Before Sunrise | (SL-12-1)21/2/34 | Co C-30496 |
| 20 | Take a Walk Around the Corner | (15604-)14/8/34 | Co C-30496 |
| 21 | My Woman's Gone Wrong | (15626-1)14/8/34 | Co C-30496 |
| 22 | Southbound Blues | (15627-2)14/8/34 | Co C-30496 |
| 23 | Barrel House Woman | (15628-2)14/8/34 | Co C-30496 |
| 24 | Barrel House Woman No. 2 | (15633-2)15/8/34 | Yz L-1019 |
| 25 | I Believe I'll Make a Change | (15645-2)16/8/34 | Co C-30496 |
| 26 | Bo Bo Stomp | (15649-1)16/8/34 | Co C-30496 |
| 27 | Big Four Blues | (16416-1)14/12/34 | Co C-20496 |
| 28 | Hard Hearted Papa | (16417-2)14/12/34 | Bio BLP-C9 |
| 29 | You Left Me Crying | (16418-2)14/12/34 | Bio BLP-C9 |
| 30 | Broken-Hearted Man | (16425-1)14/12/34 | Bio BLP-C9 |
| 31 | Evil-Hearted Woman | (16426-1)14/12/34 | Bio BLP-C9 |
| 32 | Good Woman Blues | (16427-1)14/12/34 | Yz L-1019 |
| 33 | Hustler's Blues | (16428-1)14/12/34 | Co C-30496 |
| 34 | Eleven Twenty-Nine Blues | (16429-1)14/12/34 | Bio BLP-C9 |
| 35 | You've Got Me Grieving | (16430-2)14/12/34 | Bio BLP-C9 |
| 36 | Bread Baker | (16432-1)17/12/34 | Yz L-1036 |
| 37 | Tight Time Blues | (16433-1)17/12/34 | Bio BLP-C9 |
| 38 | Longing for My Sugar | (16434-1)17/12/34 | Yz L-1036 |
| 39 | Shinin' Pistol | (16438-)17/12/34 | Co C-30496 |

CARRL (cont.)

40	It's Too Short	(16440-1)17/12/34	Co C-30496
41	Suicide Blues	(16442-1)17/12/34	Bio BLP-C9

CARTG George Carter

1	Rising River Blues	(21153-2)c.2/29	Yz L-1012
2	Hot Jelly Roll Blues	(21154-2)c.2/29	Yz L-1012

CARTM Margaret Carter

1	I Want Plenty of Grease in My Frying Pan	(107041)8/26	His HLP-15
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CARTS "Spider" Carter

1	Don't Leave Me Blues	(C-6165-)c.8/11/30	Rt RL-340
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CHATB Bo Chatman (Bo Carter)

1	I'm an Old Bumble Bee	(404720-B)15/12/30	RBF RF-9
2	Ram Rod Daddy	(404926-A)4/6/31	His HLP-5
3	The Law Gonna Step on You	(404935-A)5/6/31	Yz L-1034
4	Ants in My Pants	(404938-B)5/6/31	His HLP-5
5	I Want You to Know	(405025-1)25/10/31	Yz L-1014
6	Bo Carter Special	(82611-1)26/3/34	Yz L-1034
7	Beans	(82612-1)26/3/34	Yz L-1014
8	Tellin' You 'Bout It	(82616-1)26/3/34	Yz L-1014
9	Let Me Roll Your Lemon	(87624-1)19/1/35	Yz L-1034
10	Howlin' Tom Cat Blues	(82630-1)27/3/34	Yz L-1034
11	Sales Tax	(82635-1)27/3/34	Yz L-1014
12	I Get the Blues	(99235-1)20/2/36	Yz L-1034
13	Rolling Blues	(99237-1)20/2/36	Yz L-1034
14	All Around Man	(99238-1)20/2/36	Me1 MLP-7324
15	Dinner Blues	(99242-1)20/2/36	Yz L-1014
16	Cigarette Blues	(99244-1)20/2/36	RBF RF-14
17	Pussy Cat Blues	(02613-1)15/10/36	Yz L-1034
18	The Ins and Outs of My Girl	(02614-1)15/10/36	Yz L-1014
19	Bo Carter's Advice	(02616-1)15/10/36	Yz L-1014
20	Double Up in a Knot	(02617-1)15/10/36	Yz L-1034
21	Your Biscuits Are Big Enough for Me	(02619-1)15/10/36	Yz L-1014
22	Sue Cow	(02624-1)15/10/36	OJL 18
23	Shake 'Em On Down	(027869-1)22/10/38	Yz L-1034
24	Who's Been Here?	(027873-1)22/10/38	Yz L-1014
25	Let's Get Drunk Again	(027876-1)22/10/38	Yz L-1014
26	Some Day	(027877-1)22/10/38	Yz L-1034
27	Old Devil	(027878-1)22/10/38	Yz L-1007
28	Country Fool	(027879-1)22/10/38	Yz L-1014
29	Arrangement for Me--Blues	(047647-1)12/2/40	Yz L-1014
30	My Baby	(047652-1)12/2/40	Yz L-1034
31	Policy Blues	(047653-1)12/2/40	Yz L-1034
32	Honey	(047658-1)12/2/40	Yz L-1034

CHATL Lonnie Chatman

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|---|-------------------------------------|------------------|---------------|
| 1 | Is't a Pain to Me | (L-1545-2)c.7/32 | Bio BLP-12041 |
| 2 | The New Sittin' On Top of the World | (L-1556-2)c.7/32 | Bio BLP-12041 |
| 3 | Please Baby | (L-1562-2)c.7/32 | Bio BLP-12041 |

CHATP Peter Chatman (Memphis Slim)

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|----|-----------------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| 1 | Beer Drinking Woman | (053590-1)30/10/40 | RCA 730.581 |
| 2 | You Don't Mean Me No Good | (053591-1)30/10/40 | RCA 730.581 |
| 3 | Grinder Man Blues | (053592-1)30/10/40 | RCA 730.581 |
| 4 | Empty Room Blues | (053593-1)30/10/40 | RCA 730.581 |
| 5 | I See My Great Mistake | (053595-1)30/10/40 | RCA 730.581 |
| 6 | Old Taylor | (059497-1)1/4/41 | RCA 730.581 |
| 7 | I Believe I'll Settle Down | (059498-1)1/4/41 | RCA 730.581 |
| 8 | Jasper's Gal | (059499-1)1/4/41 | RCA 730.581 |
| 9 | You Got to Help Me Some | (064000-1)1/4/41 | RCA 730.581 |
| 10 | Two of a Kind | (064001-1)1/4/41 | RCA 730.581 |
| 11 | Maybe I'll Loan You a Dime | (064003-1)1/4/41 | RCA 730.581 |
| 12 | Me, Myself, and I | (064004-1)1/4/41 | RCA 730.581 |
| 13 | Whiskey and Gin Blues | (070434-1)4/12/41 | RCA 730.581 |
| 14 | You Gonna Worry Too | (070435-1)4/12/41 | RCA 730.581 |
| 15 | Caught the Old Coon at Last | (070437-1)4/12/41 | RCA 730.581 |
| 16 | Lend Me Your Love | (070439-1)4/12/41 | RCA 730.581 |

CHUR Blind Clyde Church

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|---|-------------------|----------------|-----------|
| 1 | Number Nine Blues | (56307)30/9/29 | Rt RL-329 |
| 2 | Pneumatic Blues | (56308)30/9/29 | Rt RL-329 |

CLAL Lonnie Clark

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|---|-------------------|----------------|-----------|
| 1 | Broke Down Engine | (15660)21/9/29 | Rt RL-340 |
| 2 | Down in Tennessee | (15661)21/9/29 | Rt RL-340 |

CLAYJ Jennie Clayton

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|---|---|-------------------|-------------|
| 1 | I Packed My Suitcase, Started to
the Train | (40312-1)19/10/27 | Rt RL-311 |
| 2 | State of Tennessee Blues | (40313-2)19/10/27 | Rt RL-322 |
| 3 | Bob Lee Junior Blues | (40314-2)19/10/27 | Fwy FA-2953 |

CLEV Big Boy Cleveland

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|---|--------------------------|----------------|------------|
| 1 | Goin' to Leave You Blues | (12700)12/4/27 | His HLP-22 |
|---|--------------------------|----------------|------------|

COLEJ James Cole

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|---|------------------------------------|----------------|-----------|
| 1 | Mistreated the Only Friend You Had | (18324)16/1/32 | Rt RL-311 |
|---|------------------------------------|----------------|-----------|

COLEK Kid Cole

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|---|-------------------------|------------------|-----------|
| 1 | Hard Hearted Mama Blues | (C-1997-)c.6/28 | Rt RL-313 |
| 2 | Niagara Fall Blues | (C-1998-)c.6/28 | Rt RL-313 |

COLFB Bob Coleman

1 Sing Song Blues (15167)7/6/29 Rt RL-340

COLFJ Jaybird Coleman

1 Man Trouble Blues (GEX-771)c.3/8/27 OJL 8
 2 No More Good Water (GEX-800)c.11/8/27 OJL 14
 3 Mistreatin' Mama (GEX-801-A)c.11/8/27 OJL 14
 4 Save Your Money--Let These Women Go (GEX-802-B)c.11/8/27 Rt RL-313
 5 Coffee Grinder Blues (150360-2)22/4/30 Yz L-1006
 6 Man Trouble Blues (150631-1)22/4/30 Rt RL-313

COLFL Lonnie Coleman

1 Old Rock Island Blues (148258-2)12/4/29 RBF RF-15
 2 Wild About My Loving (148259-2)12/4/29 Rt RL-318

COLLC Chasey Collins

1 Walking Blues (96248-1)31/10/35 Rt RL-316
 2 Atlanta Town (96249-1)31/10/35 BC 2

COLLS Sam Collins

1 The Jail House Blues (12736)c.23/4/27 OJL 2
 2 Devil in the Lion's Den (12737)c.23/4/27 OJL 10
 3 Yellow Dog Blues (12730)c.23/4/27 OJL 10
 4 Loving Lady Blues (12739)c.23/4/27 OJL 10
 5 Riverside Blues (12740)c.23/4/27 OJL 10
 6 Hesitation Blues (13033)c.17/9/27 OJL 10
 7 Midnight Special Blues (13035)c.17/9/27 OJL 10
 8 It Won't Be Long (13049-A)c.17/9/27 OJL 10
 9 Do That Thing (13050-A)c.17/9/27 OJL 10
 10 Lonesome Road Blues (10836-)8/10/31 Yz L-1038
 11 New Salty Dog (10837-1)8/10/31 OJL 10
 12 Slow Mama Slow (10839-2)8/10/31 OJL 10
 13 I'm Sitting on Top of the World (10842-2)8/10/31 OJL 10
 14 My Road Is Rough and Rocky ()c.10/31 Yz L-1038

COOKR Robert Cooksey

1 Dollar Blues (E-22051)c.21/3/27 Rt RL-321
 2 Hock My Shoes (E-22059)c.21/3/27 Rt RL-321

COVB Blind (Bogus) Ben Covington

1 It's a Fight Like That (C-4630-)c.9/10/28 Rt RL-325
 2 Boogie-De-Bum Bum (C-4631-)c.9/10/28 Rt RL-325

COXI Ida Cox

1 Ida Cox's Lawdy, Lawdy Blues (1488-?)7/23 BYG 529073
 2 Wild Women Don't Have the Blues (1842-?)c.8/24 Jo SM-3098

COXI (cont.)

3	Misery Blues	(1999-?)1/25	BYG 529073
4	Blues Kentucky Blues	(2003-2)1/25	BYG 529073
5	Long Distance Blues	(2243-?)8/25	BYG 529073
6	Southern Woman's Blues	(2244-?)8/25	Jo SM-3098
7	Lonesome Blues	(2246-1)8/25	BYG 529073
8	Coffin Blues	(2293-1)9/25	BYG 529073
9	Rambling Blues	(2294-?)9/25	BYG 529073
10	Worn Down Daddy Blues	(20766-1)c.8/28	BYG 529073
11	You Stole My Man	(20768-1)c.8/28	BYG 529073

CRAW Rosetta Crawford

1	My Man Jumped Salty On Me	(64972-A)1/2/39	Cor CP-58
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CRUD Arthur "Big Boy" Crudup

1	Black Pony Blues	(064873-1)11/9/41	RCA LPV-518
2	Death Valley Blues	(064874-1)11/9/41	RCA LPV-518
3	If I Get Lucky	(064876-1)11/9/41	RBF RF-202
4	Mean Old Frisco Blues	(070863-1)15/4/42	RBF RF-202

CURR Ben Curry

1	Fat Mouth Blues	(L-1236-2)c.1/32	Rb RL-325
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DADD Daddy Stovepipe (Johnny Watson)

1	Sundown Blues	(11861-A)10/5/24	Rt RL-325
2	Stove Pipe Blues	(11862-A)10/5/24	Rt RL-325
3	Tuxedo Blues	(GEX-730-A)c.13/7/27	OJL 14

DANJ Julius Daniels

1	My Mama Was a Sailor	(37931-2)19/2/27	Rt RL-326
2	Ninety-Nine Year Blues	(37932-?)19/2/27	Fwy FA-2953

DARB Blind Darby (Blind Blues Darby; Teddy Darby)

1	Lawdy Lawdy Worried Blues	(15566)7/9/29	Yz L-1003
2	Deceiving Blues	(67583-1)29/9/31	OJL 20
3	Built Right on the Ground	(67584-1)29/9/31	Yz L-1003

DAVEC Charles "Cow Cow" Davenport

1	I Ain't No Ice Man	(63764-A)8/5/38	AH 158
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DAVEJ Jed Davenport

1	Save Me Some	(MEM-774)20/10/30	OJL 19
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DAVIC Carl Davis

1 Elm Street Woman Blues

(DAL-103-)20/9/35 BC 2

DAVIM Madlyn Davis

1 It's Red Hot

(20908-?)c.10/28

Yz L-1039

2 Too Black Bad

(20909-?)c.10/28

Yz L-1039

DAVIN Walter Davis

1 M. & O. Blues

(62907-2)12/6/30

RCA INT-1085

2 That Stuff You Sell Ain't No Good

(69416-2)10/6/31

RCA INT-1085

3 Howling Wind Blues

(67579-1)29/9/31

RCA INT-1085

4 M. & O. Blues No. 3

(70676-1)10/2/32

RBF RF-12

5 L & N Blues

(76802-1)2/8/33

RCA INT-1085

6 Sloppy Drunk Again

(85479-1)25/2/35

OJL 20

7 Travelin' This Lonesome Road

(85480-1)25/2/35

RCA INT-1175

8 Sad and Lonesome Blues

(85481-1)25/2/35

RCA INT-1175

9 Minute Man Blues--Part 1

(85482-1)25/2/35

RCA INT-1085

10 Minute Man Blues--Part 2

(85483-1)25/2/35

RCA INT-1085

11 Sweet Sixteen

(85484-1)25/2/35

RCA INT-1085

12 Root Man Blues

(91430-1)28/7/35

RCA INT-1085

13 I Can Tell By the Way You Smell

(91433-1)28/7/35

Yz L-1025

14 Sant Claus

(91434-1)28/7/35

Yz L-1025

15 Moonlight Is My Spread

(95234-1)31/10/35

RCA INT-1085

16 Ashes In My Whiskey

(96237-1)31/10/35

RCA INT-1085

17 Jacksonville--Part 2

(100338-1)3/4/36

Yz L-1025

18 Think You Need a Shot

(100339-1)3/4/36

RCA INT-1085

19 Let Me In Your Saddle

(040511-1)21/7/39

RCA INT-1085

20 Call Your Name

(040523-1)21/7/39

Yz L-1025

21 Can't See Your Face

(049320-1)12/7/40

Yz L-1025

22 Please Don't Mistreat Me

(049323-1)12/7/40

Yz L-1025

23 Why Shouldn't I Be Blue

(049325-1)12/7/40

Yz L-1025

24 The Only Woman

(053975-1)21/3/41

RCA INT-1085

25 New "Come Back Baby"

(053979-1)21/3/41

RCA INT-1085

26 Don't You Want to Go

(070448-1)5/12/41

RCA INT-1085

27 Just Want to Talk Awhile

(070451-1)5/12/41

RCA INT-1085

DAYT Texas Bill Day

1 Goin' Back to My Baby

(149512-1)4/12/29

Rt RL-327

2 Elm Street Blues

(149538-2)5/12/29

Fly LP-103

3 Billiken's Weary Blues

(149539-2)5/12/29

Rt RL-335

DAYW Will Day

1 Central Avenue Blues

(146186-2)25/4/28

Yz L-1010

2 Sunrise Blues

(146191-2)25/4/28

Ya L-1032

DEAN Joe Dean

1 I'm So Glad I'm Twenty-One Years
Old Today

(C-5991-)7/8/30

Yz L-1028

DELAN Mattie Delaney

- 1 Down the Big Road Blues (MEM-785-) c.21/2/30 Yz L-1009
 2 Tallahatchie River Blues (MEM-786-) c.21/2/30 Yz L-1001

DICKP Pearl Dickson

- 1 Twelve Pound Daddy (145370-3) 12/12/27 Yz L-1008
 2 Little Rock Blues (145371-2) 12/12/27 QJL 6

DICKT Tom Dickson

- 1 Death Bell Blues (400355-B) 27/2/28 Yz L-1002
 2 Happy Blues (400359-B) 27/2/28 Yz L-1002
 3 Labor Blues (400360-A) 27/2/28 Yz L-1008

DOOL Simmie Dooley

- 1 Gonna Tip Out Tonight (146067-1) 14/4/28 QJL 18

DORST Thomas A. Dorsey (Georgia Tom)

- 1 Grievein' Me Blues () c.6/9/28 His HLP-1
 2 Broke Man's Blues (15306-A) 8/7/29 Riv RM-8803
 3 Pig Meat Blues (15310) 8/7/29 Riv RM-8803
 4 Second-Hand Woman Blues (16221) 5/2/30 Riv RM-8803
 5 Maybe It's the Blues (16222) 5/2/30 Riv RM-8803
 6 Levee Bound Blues (16224) 5/2/30 Riv RM-8803
 7 Gee, But It's Hard (16225) 5/2/30 Riv RM-8803
 8 Terrible Operation Blues (10048-2) 17/9/30 Yz L-1035
 9 Terrible Operation Blues (17276-B) 19/11/30 Riv RM-8803
 10 Where Did You Stay Last Night? (17277-A) 19/11/30 Riv RM-8803
 11 Fix It (17278-A) 19/11/30 Riv RM-8803
 12 Been Mistreated Blues (17290) 20/11/30 Riv RM-8803
 13 Come On In (L-719-2) c.1/31 Riv RM-8803
 14 If You Want Me to Love You (11242-A) 5/2/32 Yz L-1039

DOYL Little Buddy Doyle

- 1 Hard Scufflin' Blues (MEM-17-1) 1/7/39 Rt RL-329
 2 Grief Will Kill You (MEM-18-1) 1/7/39 Rt RL-319
 3 Renewed Love Blues (MEM-152-1) 14/7/39 Rt RL-329
 4 Bad in Mind Blues (MEM-153-1) 14/7/39 Rt RL-319

EAST Amos Easton (Bumble Bee Slim)

- 1 No Woman No Nickel (L-1120-3) c.10/31 Yz L-1012
 2 I'm Waitin' On You (11503-A) 16/3/32 His HLP-31
 3 Green Country Gal (61241-A) 23/8/36 AH 158

EDMF Frank Edwards

- 1 Terraplane Blues (C-3811-1) 28/5/41 BC 6
 2 We Got to Get Together (C-3812-1) 28/5/41 BC 6

EDWJ Joe Edwards

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|---|-------------------|------------------|-----------|
| 1 | Construction Gang | (73817-B)12/9/24 | Sw S-1240 |
| 2 | He Likes It Slow | (9750-A)18/6/26 | Sw S-1240 |

EDNS Susie Edwards

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|---|-------------------|------------------|-----------|
| 1 | Construction Gang | (73817-B)12/9/24 | Sw S-1240 |
| 2 | He Likes It Slow | (9750-A)18/6/26 | Sw S-1240 |

EDWT "Big Boy"-Teddy Edwards

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|---|--------|------------------|------|
| 1 | Louise | (80608-M)14/6/34 | CC 3 |
|---|--------|------------------|------|

ESTE Sleepy John Estes

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|----|--|------------------|------------|
| 1 | The Girl I Love, She Got Long.
Curly Hair | (55581-1)24/9/29 | RBF RF-8 |
| 2 | Broken-Hearted, Ragged and Dirty
Too | (55531-3)26/9/29 | Rt RL-307 |
| 3 | Diving Duck Blues | (55596-2)26/9/29 | RBF RF-8 |
| 4 | Black Mattie Blues | (56335-1)2/10/29 | Rt RL-307 |
| 5 | Milk Cow Blues | (59918-)13/5/30 | RBF RF-202 |
| 6 | Street Car Blues | (59919-)13/5/30 | RBF RF-8 |
| 7 | Whatcha Doin'? | (59967-)21/5/30 | Rt RL-323 |
| 8 | Poor John Blues | (59968-)21/5/30 | Rt RL-323 |
| 9 | Stock O' Dollars | (62547-2)30/5/30 | Rt RL-307 |
| 10 | My Black Gal Blues | (62548-2)30/5/30 | Rt RL-307 |
| 11 | Down South Blues | (90094-A)9/7/35 | Sw S-1219 |
| 12 | Stop That Thing | (90095-A)9/7/35 | Sw S-1219 |
| 13 | Someday Baby Blues | (90096-A)9/7/35 | Br 87.504 |
| 14 | Who's Been Tellin' You Buddy Brown
Blues | (90097-A)9/7/35 | Sw S-1219 |
| 15 | Married Woman Blues | (90175-A)17/7/35 | OJL 21 |
| 16 | Drop Down Mama | (90176-A)17/7/35 | OJL 21 |
| 17 | Government Money | (62461-A)2/8/35 | Sw S-1219 |
| 18 | I Want a Tear It All the Time | (62462-A)2/8/35 | Sw S-1219 |
| 19 | Vernita Blues | (62463-A)2/8/35 | Cor CP-58 |
| 20 | I Ain't Gonna Be Worried No More. | (62464-A)2/8/35 | Sw S-1219 |
| 21 | Floating Bridge | (62465-A)2/8/35 | RBF RF-8 |
| 22 | Need More Blues | (62466-A)2/8/35 | RBF RF-8 |
| 23 | Jack and Jill Blues | (62479-A)3/8/35 | RBF RF-8 |
| 24 | Poor Man's Friend | (62480-A)3/8/35 | RBF RF-11 |
| 25 | Hobo Jungle Blues | (62481-A)3/8/35 | Sw S-1219 |
| 26 | Airplane Blues | (62482-A)3/8/35 | Sw S-1219 |
| 27 | Everybody Oughta Make a Change | (63647-A)22/4/38 | RBF RF-8 |
| 28 | Liquor Store Blues | (63648-A)22/4/38 | RBF RF-11 |
| 29 | Easin' Back to Tennessee | (63649-A)22/4/38 | Sw S-1220 |
| 30 | Fire Department Blues | (63650-A)22/4/38 | Sw S-1220 |
| 31 | Clean Up At Home | (63651-B)22/4/38 | Sw S-1220 |
| 32 | New Someday Blues | (63652-A)22/4/38 | RBF RF-8 |
| 33 | Brownsville Blues | (63653-A)22/4/38 | RBF RF-8 |
| 34 | Special Agent | (63654-A)22/4/38 | RBF RF-1 |

ESTE (cont.)

35	Mailman Blues	(93004-A)4/6/40	SW S-1220
36	Time Is Drawing Near	(93005-A)4/6/40	SW S-1220
37	Mary Come On Home	(93006-A)4/6/40	SW S-1220
38	Jailhouse Blues	(93007-A)4/6/40	RBF RF-8
39	Tell Me How About It	(93008-A)4/6/40	SW S-1220
40	Drop Down	(93009-A)4/6/40	SW S-1220
41	You Shouldn't Do That	(064916-1)24/9/41	BC 7
42	Lawyer Clark Blues	(064924-1)24/9/41	RCA LPV-518
43	Little Laura Blues	(064925-1)24/9/41	RCA LPV-518
44	Working Man Blues	(064926-1)24/9/41	RBF RF-8

EVANJ Joe Evans

1	New Huntsville Jail	(10651-2)20/5/31	His HLP-8002
2	Sitting On Top of the World	(10659-1)21/5/31	His HLP-8002
3	Down In Black Bottom	(10664-1)21/5/31	Yz L-1015
4	Shook It This Morning	(10665-2)21/5/31	Yz L-1015

EZEI Will Ezell

1	Pitchin' Boogie	(15650)20/9/29	MIL MLP-2018
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FLON Nellie Florence

1	Jacksonville Blues	(146174-1)21/4/28	OJL 6
2	Midnight Weeping Blues	(146175-2)21/4/28	OJL 6

FOSD Dessa Foster

1	Tell It to the Judge No. 1	(C-7238-A)c.28/1/31	Yz L-1031
2	Tell It to the Judge No. 2	(C-7239-?)c.28/1/31	Yz L-1031

FOXJ John D. Fox

1	The Worried Man Blues	(GEX-1011-A)14/12/27	OJL 10
2	The Monain' Blues	(GEX-1019-A)15/12/27	Rt RL-334

FULB Blind Boy Fuller

1	I'm a Rattlesnakin' Daddy	(17862-2)23/7/35	BC 11
2	Rag, Mama, Rag	(17873-2)25/7/35	BC 6
3	Stealing Bo-Hog	(21627-2)7/9/37	BC 11
4	Bye Bye Baby Blues	(22156-1)15/12/37	RBF RF-9
5	Pistol Snapper Blues	(22674-1)5/4/38	BC 11
6	Piccolo Rag	(22677-1)5/4/38	BC 11
7	Big House Bound	(SC-25-1)29/10/38	BC 11
8	You've Got Something There	(MEM-102-1)12/7/39	BC 11
9	Step It Up and Go	(26592-A)5/3/40	BC 11
10	Somebody's Been Talkin'	(26599-A)6/3/40	Rt RL-318
11	Three Ball Blues	(26600-A)6/3/40	BC 11
12	Good Feeling Blues	(26616-A)7/3/40	BC 11

FULB (cont.)

13	Crooked Woman Blues	(26619-A)7/3/40	Rt RL-318
14	Bus Rider Blues	(WC-3139-A)19/6/40	BC 11
15	You Got to Have Your Dollar	(WC-3140-A)19/6/40	His HLP-31
16	Thousand Women Blues	(WC-3142-A)19/6/40	RBF RF-202

CAIT Bill Gaither (Leroy's Buddy)

1	Georgia Barrel House	(WC-3104-A)12/6/40	His HLP-31
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GIBB Cleo Gibson

1	I've Got Ford Movements In My Hips	(402311-B)14/3/29	Sw S-1240
2	Nothing But the Blues	(402312-B)14/3/29	Sw S-1240

GIBC Clifford Gibson

1	Beat You Doing It	(483-A)c.6/29	Yz L-1027
2	Whiskey Moan Blues	(483-A)c.6/29	Yz L-1006
3	Tired of Being Mistreated Part 1	(484-A)c.6/29	Yz L-1027
4	Tired of Being Mistreated Part 2	(485-A)c.6/29	Yz L-1006
5	Stop Your Rambling	(486-A)c.6/29	Yz L-1027
6	Sunshine Moan	(487-A)c.6/29	Yz L-1027
7	I'm Tired of Being Mistreated	(402459-B)14/6/29	Yz L-1027
8	Ice and Snow Blues	(57173-2)26/11/29	Yz L-1027
9	Don't Put That Thing On Me	(57174-2)26/11/29	Yz L-1006
10	Drayman Blues	(57175-2)26/11/29	Yz L-1027
11	Old Time Rider	(57176-2)26/11/29	Yz L-1027
12	Bad Luck Dice	(57753-)10/12/29	Yz L-1027
13	Levee Camp Moan	(57754-2)10/12/29	Yz L-1027
14	Hard-Headed Blues	(57755-2)10/12/29	Yz L-1027
15	Blues Without a Dime	(57756-)10/12/29	Yz L-1027
16	Keep Your Windows Pinned	(57757)10/12/29	Yz L-1006
17	Jive Me Blues	(57758-1)10/12/29	Yz L-1027
18	Brooklyn Blues	(57759-1)10/12/29	Yz L-1027
19	Society Blues	(57760-)10/12/29	Yz L-1027
20	She Rolls It Slow	(69405-)9/6/31	RCA INT-1175

GILL "Bill" Jazz" Gillum

1	You're Laughing Now	(020822-)16/6/38	RCA INT-1177
2	I'm Gonna Get It	(020823-)16/6/38	RCA INT-1177
3	Let Her Go	(030823-)16/12/38	RCA INT-1177
4	She Won't Treat Me Kind	(030826-)16/12/38	RCA INT-1177
5	I'll Get Along Somehow	(030827-)16/12/38	RCA INT-1177
6	Got to Reap What You Sow	(034810-)17/5/39	RCA INT-1177
7	Keyhole Blues	(034813-)17/5/39	RCA INT-1177
8	Key to the Highway	(044972-)9/5/40	RBF RF-16
9	Riley Springs Blues	(064737-)4/7/41	RCA INT-1177
10	I Got Somebody Else	(064739-)4/7/41	RCA INT-1177
11	It Looks Bad For You	(064741-)4/7/41	RCA INT-1177
12	Me and My Buddy	(064742-)4/7/41	RCA INT-1177

GILL (cont.)

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|----|---|-----------|---------|--------------|
| 13 | It's All Over Now | (070449-) | 5/12/41 | RCA INT-1177 |
| 14 | One Letter Home | (070443-) | 5/12/41 | RCA INT-1177 |
| 15 | You Drink Too Much Whiskey | (070445-) | 5/12/41 | RCA INT-1177 |
| 16 | I'm Gonna Leave You On the
Outskirts of Town | (074548-) | 30/7/42 | RCA INT-1177 |
| 17 | Woke Up Cold In Hand | (074551-) | 30/7/42 | RCA INT-1177 |

GLAZ Ruby Glaze

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|---|--------------------|-----------|---------|-------------|
| 1 | Rollin' Mama Blues | (71603-) | 22/2/32 | Rt RL-324 |
| 2 | Lonesome Day Blues | (71604-1) | 22/2/32 | RCA LPW-518 |

GLOV Mae Glover

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|---|----------------------------|-----------|---------|-----------|
| 1 | Shake It Daddy | (15392) | 29/7/29 | OJL 6 |
| 2 | Pig Meat Mama | (15393) | 29/7/29 | Rt RL-319 |
| 3 | I Ain't Giving Nobody None | (15395-A) | 29/7/29 | Her H-201 |
| 4 | Gas Man Blues | (15396-A) | 29/7/29 | Yz L-1009 |

GRAN Bobby Grant

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|---|------------------------|-----------|---------|-----------|
| 1 | Nappy Head Blues | (26204-3) | c.12/27 | Yz L-1001 |
| 2 | Lonesome Atlanta Blues | (20212-2) | c.12/27 | Yz L-1009 |

GRAV Blind Roosevelt Graves

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|---|----------------|-----------|---------|------------|
| 1 | New York Blues | (15640-A) | 20/9/29 | His MLP-T5 |
|---|----------------|-----------|---------|------------|

GRELI Lil Green

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|----|------------------------------|------------|---------|-------------|
| 1 | Just Rockin' | (044975-1) | 9/5/40 | RCA LPV-574 |
| 2 | What Have I Done? | (044976-1) | 9/5/40 | RCA LPV-574 |
| 3 | Give Your Mama One Smile | (059150-1) | 21/1/41 | RCA LPV-574 |
| 4 | My Mellow Man | (059151-1) | 21/1/41 | RCA LPV-574 |
| 5 | Knockin' Myself Out | (059152-1) | 21/1/41 | RCA LPV-574 |
| 6 | Why Don't You Do Right? | (064130-1) | 23/4/41 | RCA LPV-574 |
| 7 | Love Me | (064131-1) | 23/4/41 | RCA LPV-574 |
| 8 | What's the Matter With Love? | (064133-1) | 23/4/41 | RCA LPV-574 |
| 9 | Country Boy Blues | (064134-1) | 23/4/41 | RCA LPV-574 |
| 10 | How Can I Go On? | (064135-1) | 23/4/41 | RCA LPV-574 |
| 11 | If I Didn't Love You | (064728-1) | 23/7/41 | RCA LPV-574 |
| 12 | I'm Wasting My Time on You | (070803-1) | 27/1/42 | RCA LPV-574 |
| 13 | If I'm a Fool | (070802-1) | 27/1/42 | RCA LPV-574 |

GROS Helen Gross

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|---|-----------------|-----------|--------|------------|
| 1 | Hard Luck Blues | (31564) | c.5/24 | VJM VLP-40 |
| 2 | Strange Man | (31590-1) | c.7/24 | VJM VLP-40 |

HANN George Hannah

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|---|--------------------|-----------|---------|--------------|
| 1 | Freakish Man Blues | (L-562-1) | c.10/30 | Mit MLP-2018 |
|---|--------------------|-----------|---------|--------------|

HARD Lane Hardin

- 1 California Desert Blues (91450-1)28/7/35 Rt RL-319

HAR1 Magnolia Harris

- 1 Mama's Quittin' and Leavin'--Part 1 (C-7100-) c.12/30 Yz L-1031
2 Mama's Quittin' and Leavin'--Part 2 (C-7101-) c.12/30 Yz L-1031

HARD Otis Harris

- 1 Waking Blues (147608-1)8/12/28 Fly LP-103
2 You'll Like My Loving (147609-2)8/12/29 Yz L-1032

HARM William Harris

- 1 I'm Leavin' Town (GEX-743-8)c.18/7/27 Yz L-1001
2 Bull Frog Blues (14318-1)10/10/28 OJL 5
3 Hot Time Blues (14323)11/10/28 OJL 5

HARX Willie Harris

- 1 Lonesome Midnight Dream (C-5551-) c.3/30 Rt RL-340

HARY Smoky Harrison

- 1 Hop Head Blues (L-79-1) c.12/29 Rt RL-340
2 Iggy Oggly Blues (L-80-1) c.12/29 Rt RL-340

HARZ Hattie Hart

- 1 Memphis Yo Yo Blues (56345-2)4/10/29 Rt RL-322
2 Oh Ambulance Man (59932-2)17/5/30 Me1 MLP-7324
3 I Let My Daddy Do That (15899-) 13/9/34 Mam S-3803
4 Coldest Stuff In Town (15952-) 14/9/34 Yz L-1021

HAWK Walter "Buddy Boy" Hawkins

- 1 Shaggy Dog Blues (4415--)c.4/27 Rt RL-319
2 Number Three Blues (4416-2)c.4/27 Yz L-1010
3 Jailhouse Fire Blues (4419-2)c.4/27 Rt RL-319
4 Snatch It Back Blues (4420-2)c.4/27 Yz L-1010
5 Awful Fix Blues (20034-1)c.9/27 Yz L-1004
6 How Come Mama Blues (15213)14/6/29 Yz L-1010
7 Voice Throwin' Blues (15219)14/6/29 Yz L-1010

HAYEN Nap Hayes

- 1 Violin Blues (400239-A)15/2/28 Rt RL-316

HENDB Bertha Henderson

- 1 Lead Hearted Blues (20560-2)c.5/28 B10 BLP-12037
2 Let Your Love Come Down (20562-2)c.5/28 B10 BLP-12037

HENDK Katherine Henderson

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|---|------------------------------|----------------|------------|
| 1 | West End Blues | (235-A)c.9/28 | Hls HLP-21 |
| 2 | St. Louis Blues | (296-A)c.9/28 | Hls HLP-21 |
| 3 | Have You Ever Felt That Way? | (257-A)c.10/28 | Hls HLP-21 |
| 4 | Mushy Love | (274-A)c.11/28 | Hls HLP-21 |

HENDR Rosa Henderson

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|---|--------------|---------|-----------|
| 1 | Get It Fixed | (c.4/25 | Ri HLP-15 |
|---|--------------|---------|-----------|

HENRH Hound Head Henry

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|---|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| 1 | Low Down Hound Blues | (C-2451-)17/10/28 | Hls HLP-2 |
| 2 | My Silver Dollar Mama | (C-2452-)17/10/28 | Hls HLP-2 |

HENRL Lena Henry

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|---|---------------------------|----------------|------------|
| 1 | Low Down Despondent Blues | (13596)22/8/24 | Hls HLP-15 |
|---|---------------------------|----------------|------------|

HICR Robert Hicks (Barbecue Bob)

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|----|--------------------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| 1 | Barbecue Blues | (143757-1)25/3/27 | CC 36 |
| 2 | Cloudy Sky Blues | (143758-2)25/3/27 | CC 36 |
| 3 | Poor Boy a Long Ways From Home | (144281-2)16/6/27 | Rt RL-326 |
| 4 | Easy Rider Don't Deny My Name | (144284-3)16/6/27 | RBF RF-15 |
| 5 | Motherless Chile Blues | (145134-1)5/11/27 | RBF RF-15 |
| 6 | How Long Pretty Mama | (145135-2)5/11/27 | CC 36 |
| 7 | Crooked Woman Blues | (145198-1)10/11/27 | CC 36 |
| 8 | 'Fo Day Creep | (145199-1)10/11/27 | CC 36 |
| 9 | Blind Pig Blues | (146050-1)13/4/28 | CC 36 |
| 10 | Chocolate to the Bone | (146054-2)13/4/28 | CC 36 |
| 11 | Hurry and Bring It Back Home | (146055-2)13/4/28 | CC 36 |
| 12 | Ease It to Me Blues | (146173-2)21/4/28 | BC 7 |
| 13 | She's Gone Blues | (147306-1)26/10/28 | RBF RF-15 |
| 14 | California Blues | (148358-2)18/4/29 | CC 36 |
| 15 | Black Skunk Blues | (148360-2)18/4/29 | CC 36 |
| 16 | Freeze to Me Mama | (149345-2)3/11/29 | CC 36 |
| 17 | Me and My Whiskey | (149346-2)3/11/29 | CC 36 |
| 18 | unnamed title | (149347-1)3/11/29 | Yz L-1012 |
| 19 | Yo-Yo Blues No. 2 | (150269-2)17/4/30 | CC 3 |
| 20 | We Sure Got Hard Times Now | (150273-1)18/4/30 | CC 36 |
| 21 | The Spider and the Fly | (150365-2)23/4/30 | CC 36 |
| 22 | Atlanta Moan | (151054-2)5/12/30 | Yz L-1026 |
| 23 | Doin' the Scraunch | (151056-2)5/12/30 | CC 36 |

HILB Bertha "Chippie" Hill

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|---|------------------------|------------------|------------|
| 1 | Low Land Blues | (9456-A)9/11/25 | Bio BLP-C6 |
| 2 | Kid Man Blues | (9457-A)9/11/25 | Bio BLP-C6 |
| 3 | Pleadin' for the Blues | (9949-A)23/11/26 | Sw S-1240 |
| 4 | Pratt City Blues | (9950-A)23/11/26 | Sw S-1240 |
| 5 | Lovesick Blues | (9971-A)26/11/26 | CC 32 |

HILB (cont.)

6	Lonesome Weary Blues	(9972-A)26/11/26	CC 32
HILK King Solomon Hill (Joe Holmes)			
1	Whoopie Blues	(L-1252-1)c.1/32	Rt RL-335
2	Whoopie Blues	(L-1252-2)c.1/32	Yz L-1026
3	Down on My Bended Knee	(L-1253-2)c.1/32	Yz L-1032
4	The Gone, Dead Train	(L-1254-2)c.1/32	Yz L-1004
5	Tell Me Baby	(L-1258-2)c.1/32	Yz L-1004
HILR Robert Hill			
1	I Had a Gal for the Last Fifteen Years	(02603-1)15/10/36	His HLP-31
HILSY Sammy Hill			
1	Cryin' for the Blues	(55319)9/8/29	Yz L-1004
2	Needin' My Woman Blues	(55320)9/8/29	Yz L-1004
HITE Mattie Hite			
1	Graveyard Dream Blues	(70413)c.11/23	VJM VLP-40
2	Mason-Dixon Blues	(70414)c.11/23	VJM VLP-40
HOGG Andrew Hogg			
1	Family Trouble Blues	(61856-A)18/2/37	Rt RL-315
HOLLT Tony Hollins			
1	Stamp Blues	(C-3843-1)3/6/41	BC 5
HOUS Son House			
1	My Black Mama--Part 1	(L-408-2)28/5/30	OJL 2
2	My Black Mama--Part 2	(L-409-2)28/5/30	OJL 2
3	Preachin' the Blues--Part 1	(L-410-1)28/5/30	OJL 5
4	Preachin' the Blues--Part 2	(L-411-1)28/5/30	OJL 5
5	Dry Spell Blues--Part 1	(L-425-4)28/5/30	OJL 11
6	Dry Spell Blues--Part 2	(L-426-2)28/5/30	OJL 11
HOWE Peg Leg Howell			
1	Coal Man Blues	(143116-2)8/11/26	RF RF-202
2	Tishamingo Blues	(143117-1)8/11/26	RF RF-9
3	Too Tight Blues	(145062-1)11/11/27	Rt RL-316
4	Doin' Wrong	(145184-2)9/11/27	RF RF-11
5	Skin Game Blues	(145185-2)9/11/27	RF RF-202
6	Please Ma'am	(146159-2)20/4/28	RF RF-15
7	Low Down Rouser Blues	(146161-1)20/4/28	RF RF-1
8	Ball and Chain Blues	(148270-2)13/4/29	Rt RL-318
9	Away From Home	(148273-2)13/4/29	Rt RL-318

HULL Papa Harvey Hull

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|---|-------------------------|-----------------|-----------|
| 1 | Gang of Brownskin Women | (12689)c.8/4/27 | Yz L-1001 |
| 2 | France Blues | (12690)c.8/4/27 | OJL 2 |
| 3 | Two Little Tommie Blues | (12691)c.8/4/27 | Yz L-1009 |
| 4 | Don't You Leave Me Here | (12692)c.8/4/27 | OJL 8 |
| 5 | Mama You Don't Know How | ()c.5/27 | Her H-201 |

HURT Mississippi John Hurt

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|---|----------------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| 1 | Nobody's Dirty Business | (400223-B)14/2/28 | Bio BLP-C4 |
| 2 | Ain't No Tellin' | (401471-A)21/12/28 | Bio BLP-C4 |
| 3 | Avalon Blues | (401473-B)21/12/28 | Bio BLP-C4 |
| 4 | Big Leg Blues | (401474-A)21/12/28 | Bio BLP-C4 |
| 5 | Candy Man Blues | (401483-B)28/12/28 | Bio BLP-C4 |
| 6 | Got the Blues Can't Be Satisfied | (401484-B)28/12/28 | Bio BLP-C4 |
| 7 | Blue Harvest Blues | (401487-A)28/12/28 | Bio BLP-C4 |

JACK (Papa) Charlie Jackson

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|----|---|------------------|---------------|
| 1 | Papa's Lawdy Lawdy Blues | (1850-1)c.8/24 | RBF RF-9 |
| 2 | Airy Man Blues | (1851-2)c.8/24 | Yz L-1029 |
| 3 | Salty Dog Blues | (1893-?)c.9/24 | Yz L-1029 |
| 4 | The Cats Got the Measles | (10019-3)c.1/25 | Bio BLP-12042 |
| 5 | I Got What It Takes But It Breaks
My Heart to Give It Away | (10020-3)c.1/25 | Bio BLP-12042 |
| 6 | Shave Em Dry | (10042-?)c.2/25 | Yz L-1029 |
| 7 | Coffee Pot Blues | (10043-?)c.2/25 | Yz L-1029 |
| 8 | Shake That Thing | (2120-?)c.5/25 | Yz L-1029 |
| 9 | The Faking Blues | (2121-?)c.5/25 | Yz L-1029 |
| 10 | I'm Alabama Bound | (2144-2)c.5/25 | Yz L-1029 |
| 11 | Drop That Sack | (2145-1)c.5/25 | Yz L-1029 |
| 12 | Hot Papa Blues | (2207-2)c.8/25 | Bio BLP-12042 |
| 13 | Take Me Back Blues | (2208-2)c.8/25 | Bio BLP-12042 |
| 14 | Mama, Don't You Think I Know? | (2224-2)c.8/25 | Bio BLP-12042 |
| 15 | Maxwell Street Blues | (2288-2)c.9/25 | Bio BLP-12042 |
| 16 | All I Want Is a Spoonful | (2298-1)c.9/25 | Bio BLP-12042 |
| 17 | Texas Blues | (11031-?)c.12/25 | Yz L-1029 |
| 18 | Butter and Egg Man Blues | (11069-1)c.2/26 | Bio BLP-12042 |
| 19 | Up the Way Bound | (2547-1)c.5/26 | Yz L-1029 |
| 20 | Your Baby Ain't Sweet Like Mine | (2613-4)c.8/26 | Yz L-1029 |
| 21 | Fat-Mouth Blues | (2769-3)c.1/27 | Yz L-1029 |
| 22 | She Belongs to Me Blues | (4243-1)c.3/27 | Yz L-1029 |
| 23 | Coal Man Blues | (4244-2)c.3/27 | Bio BLP-12042 |
| 24 | Skoodle Um Skoo | (4670-1)c.7/27 | Bio BLP-12042 |
| 25 | Sheik of Desplaines Street | (4671-2)c.7/27 | Bio BLP-12042 |
| 26 | Ash Tray Blues | (20604-2)c.5/28 | Bio BLP-12042 |
| 27 | Jungle Man Blues | (21045-2)c.12/28 | Bio BLP-12042 |
| 28 | Baby Please Lone Me Your Heart | (21081-2)c.1/29 | Yz L-1029 |

JACKJ Jim Jackson

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|---|--------------------------|------------------|------------|
| 1 | Bootlegging Blues | (41904-2)14/2/28 | Rt RL-323 |
| 2 | I'm Wild About My Lovin' | (45416-1)27/8/28 | His-HLP-32 |

JACKJ (cont.)

3	This Mornin' She Was Gone	(45417-1)27/8/28	His HLP-32
4	This Mornin' She Was Gone	(45417-2)27/8/28	His HLP-5
5	Hesitation Blues	(MEM-804-)c.2/30	Her H-205
6	St. Louis Blues	(MEM-805-)c.2/30	Yz L-1003

JAMF Frank James

1	Poor Coal Passer	(01893-1)12/12/36	Yz L-1015
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JAMJ Jesse James

1	Sweet Patuni	(90760-)3/6/36	Yz L-1028
2	Southern Casey Jones	(90761-A)3/6/36	AH 158
3	Lonesome Day Blues	(90762-A)3/6/36	AH 158

JAMS Skip James

1	Devil Got My Woman	(L-746-1)c.2/31	Bio BLP-12029
2	Cypress Grove Blues	(L-747-2)c.2/31	Bio BLP-12029
3	Cherry Ball Blues	(L-748-2)c.2/31	Bio BLP-12029
4	Hard Time Killin' Floor Blues	(L-752-2)c.2/31	Bio BLP-12029
5	Special Rider Blues	(L-760-2)c.2/31	Yz L-1001
6	Little Cow and Calf Is Gonna Die Blues	(L-763-1)c.2/31	Bio BLP-12029
7	22-20 Blues	(L-765-1)c.2/31	Bio BLP-12029
8	If You Haven't Got Any Hay Get On Down the Road	(L-766-1)c.2/31	Bio BLP-12029

JAXF Frankie "Half Pint" Jaxon

1	It's Heated	(C-3585-)11/6/29	Yz L-1039
2	Come On, Mama, Do That Dance	()27/6/29	Yz L-1039
3	She Can Love So Good	(C-6079-A)c.8/30	Me1 MLP-7324
4	Callin' Corrine	(65608-A)19/5/39	AH 158

JEFB Blind Lemon Jefferson

1	Got the Blues	(2471-1)c.3/26	Bio BLP-12000
2	Long Lonesome Blues	(2472-2)c.3/26	Bio BLP-12000
3	Booster Blues	(2474-1)c.3/26	Bio BLP-12000
4	Dry Southern Blues	(2475-1)c.3/26	Bio BLP-12000
5	Black Horse Blues	(2543-1)c.5/26	M11 MLP-2004
6	Corinna Blues	(2544-2)c.5/26	M11 MLP-2004
7	Chock House Blues	(2558-2)c.5 or 6/26	M11 MLP-2007
8	Beggid' Back	(3016-4)c.8/26	Bio BLP-12000
9	Old Rounders Blues	(3018-7)c.8/26	Rt RL-306
10	Stocking Feet Blues	(3066-1)c.10/26	M11 MLP-2013
11	That Black Snake Moan	(3067-2)c.10/26	M11 MLP-2013
12	Wartime Blues	(3070-1)c.10/26	Rt RL-301
13	Broke and Hungry	(3076-7)c.10/26	M11 MLP-2007
14	Shuckin' Sugar Blues	(3077-2)c.10/26	M11 MLP-2007
15	Booger Rooger Blues	(3088-2)c.10/26	Bio BLP-12015

JEFB (cont.)

16	Rabbit Foot Blues	(3089-1)c.10/26	Mil MLP-2004
17	Bad Luck Blues	(3090-2)c.10/26	Mil MLP-2007
18	Black Snake Moan	(80523-B)14/3/27	Fwy FJ-2802
19	Match Box Blues	(80524-B)14/3/27	RBF RF-1
20	Easy Rider Blues	(4423-2)c.4/27	Mil MLP-2004
21	Match Box Blues	(4424-2)c.4/27	Mil MLP-2004
22	Match Box Blues	(4446-4)c.4/27	Bio BLP-12000
23	Rising High Water Blues	(4491-5)c.5/27	Mil MLP-2007
24	Right of Way Blues	(4515-2)c.5/27	Rt RL-301
25	Teddy Bear Blues	(4567-2)c.6/27	Mil MLP-2007
26	Black Snake Dream Blues	(4577-2)c.6/27	Bio BLP-12015
27	Struck Sorrow Blues	(20039-2)c.9/27	Rt RL-335
28	Rambler Blues	(20040-2)c.9/27	Bio BLP-12015
29	Chinch Bug Blues	(20064-1)c.10/27	Bio BLP-12015
30	Deceitful Brownskin Woman	(20065-2)c.10/27	Bio BLP-12015
31	Sunshine Special	(20066-7)c.10/27	Mil MLP-2007
32	Lonesome House Blues	(20076-2)c.10/27	Mil MLP-2007
33	Blind Lemon's Penitentiary Blues	(20363-2)c.2/28	Mil MLP-2013
34	'Electric Chair Blues	(20364-2)c.2/28	Bio BLP-12015
35	Lemon's Worried Blues	(20375-3)c.2/28	Mil MLP-2004
36	Mean Jumper Blues	(20380-2)c.2/28	Mil MLP-2007
37	Balky Mule Blues	(20381-3)c.2/28	Mil MLP-2007
38	Change My Luck Blues	(20387-2)c.2/28	Mil MLP-2007
39	Prison Cell Blues	(20388-2)c.2/28	Mil MLP-2004
40	Long Lastin' Lovin'	(20407-2)c.3/28	Mil MLP-2013
41	Piney Woods Money Mama	(20408-2)c.3/28	Mil MLP-2004
42	Low Down Mojo Blues	(20636-1)c.6/28	Mil MLP-2004
43	Competition Bed Blues	(20749-2)c.7/28	Rt RL-306
44	Sad News Blues	(20772-2)c.7/28	Rt RL-306
45	How Long How Long	(20788-1)c.7/28	Bio BLP-12015
46	Lock Step Blues	(20815-2)c.8/28	Mil MLP-2004
47	Hangman's Blues	(20816-2)c.8/28	Mil MLP-2004
48	Christmas Eve Blues	(20818-2)c.8/28	Bio BLP-12000
49	Happy New Year Blues	(20819-2)c.8/28	Bio BLP-12000
50	Maltese Cat Blues	(20820-1)c.8/28	Bio BLP-12015
51	D B Blues	(20821-1)c.8/28	Bio BLP-12015
52	Eagle Eyed Mama	(21095-3)c.1/29	Rt RL-301
53	Dynamite Blues	(21096-1)c.1/29	Rt RL-301
54	Oh Well Blues	(21197-1)c.3/29	Riv RLP-12-125
55	Tin Cup Blues	(21198-1)c.3/29	Mil MLP-2013
56	Empty House Blues	(21200-1)c.3/29	Rt RL-335
57	Saturday Night Spender Blues	(21201-2)c.3/29	Rt RL-335
58	That Black Snake Moan No 2	(21202-1)c.3/29	Mil MLP-2013
59	Peach Orchard Mama	(21400-2)c.8/29	Riv RLP-12-125
60	Big Night Blues	(21402-2)c.8/29	Riv RLP-12-125
61	Bed Springs Blues	(15664)24/9/29	Me1 MLP-7324
62	Yo Yo Blues	(15665)24/9/29	Bio BLP-12000
63	Mosquito Moan	(15666)24/9/29	Mil MLP-2013
64	Southern Woman Blues	(15667)24/9/29	Mil MLP-2013
65	Bakershop Blues	(15668)24/9/29	Mil MLP-2013
66	Pneumonia Blues	(15669)24/9/29	Mil MLP-2013

JEFB (cont.)

67	Long Distance Moan	(15670-A)24/9/29	M11 MLP-2013
68	That Crawl'n' Baby Blues	(15671)24/9/29	MT1 MLP-2013
69	Fence Breakin' Yellin' Blues	(15672)24/9/29	B10 BLP-12015
70	Cat Man Blues	(15673)24/9/29	B10 BLP-12015
71	Boot'n' Me 'Bout	(15675)24/9/29	M11 MLP-2004
JOHAL Alec Johnson			
1	Miss Meal Cramp Blues	(147379-2)2/11/28	CC 3
2	Sundown Blues	(147381-1)2/11/28	RBF RF-15
3	Next Week Sometime	(147382-2)2/11/28	CC 3
JOHBI Billiken Johnson			
1	Sun Beam Blues	(145322-1)3/12/27	Rt RL-335
2	Interurban Blues	(145323-2)3/12/27	Rt RL-335
3	Frisco Blues	(147606-2)8/12/28	Rt RL-312
4	Wild Jack Blues	(147607-2)8/12/28	Rt RL-315
JOHBU Buster Johnson			
1	Undertaker Blues	(18323)16/1/32	QJL 2
JOHE Edith North Johnson			
1	Nickle's Worth of Liver Blues	(15558-A)7/9/29	CC 37
2	Good Chib Blues	(15559)7/9/29	CC 37
3	Can't Make Another Day	(15560)7/9/29	Riv RM-8819
4	Honeydrinker Blues	(15561)7/9/29	M11 MLP-2018
JOHEB Elizabeth Johnson			
1	Be My Kid Blues	(401279-B)30/10/28	Her H-201
2	Sobbin' Woman Blues	(401280-?)30/10/28	Her H-201
JOHJA James "Stump" Johnson			
1	Barrel of Whiskey Blues	(70680-1)10/2/32	Yz L-1033
JOHJO Joe Johnson			
1	I'm Going Back Home	(59992-)26/5/30	His HLP-32
2	Don't Want No Woman	(62539-)29/5/30	Pal PL-101
JOHK Ki Ki Johnson			
1	Lady, Your Clock Ain't Right	()c.8/28	His HLP-17
2	Wrong Woman Blues	()c.8/28	His HLP-17
JOHLE Lem Johnson			
1	Candy Blues	(70761-A)19/5/42	Br 87.504

JOHLI Lil Johnson

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|---|--|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1 | Never Let Your Left Hand Know
What Your Right Hand Do | (C-3355- | 23/4/29 | His HLP-2 |
| 2 | You'll Never Miss Your Jelly Till
Your Jelly Rollers Gone | (C-3356- | 23/4/29 | His HLP-2 |
| 3 | House Rent Scuffle | (C-3749- | c.29/6/29 | Yz L-1039 |

JOHLO Lonnie Johnson

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|----|--|------------|----------|-------------|
| 1 | Mr. Johnson's Blues | (9435-A) | 4/11/25 | CC 30 |
| 2 | Falling Rain Blues | (9436-A) | 4/11/25 | CC 30 |
| 3 | Sweet Woman You Can't Go Wrong | (81189-B) | 5/8/27 | CC 30 |
| 4 | St. Louis Cyclone Blues | (81503-B) | 3/10/27 | CC 30 |
| 5 | Life Saver Blues | (81801-B) | 9/11/27 | CC 30 |
| 6 | Blue Ghost Blues | (81802-B) | 9/11/27 | CC 30 |
| 7 | Low Land Moan | (82043-A) | 12/12/27 | CC 30 |
| 8 | I'm So Tired of Living All Alone | (400447-B) | 9/3/28 | CC 30 |
| 9 | Way Down That Lonesome Road | (400490-A) | 13/3/28 | CC 30 |
| 10 | New Black Snake Blues--Part 1 | (401222-A) | 13/10/28 | Spi LP-2001 |
| 11 | When You Fall for Someone That's
Not Your Own | (401336-B) | 16/11/28 | CC 30 |
| 12 | Sundown Blues | (402438-A) | 11/6/29 | CC 30 |
| 13 | Baby Please Don't Leave Me No More | (402441-A) | 11/6/29 | CC 30 |
| 14 | Sam, You're Just a Rat | (405141-A) | 9/2/32 | Yz L-1028 |
| 15 | I'm Nuts About That Gal | (152259-2) | 12/8/32 | CC 30 |
| 16 | Racketeers Blues | (152260-2) | 12/8/32 | CC 30 |
| 17 | Man Killing Broad | (91339-A) | 8/11/37 | Sw S-1225 |
| 18 | Hard Time Ain't Gone No Where | (91340-A) | 8/11/37 | Sw S-1225 |
| 19 | Flood Water Blues | (91341-A) | 8/11/37 | Sw S-1225 |
| 20 | It Ain't What You Usta Be | (91342-A) | 8/11/37 | Sw S-1225 |
| 21 | Something Fishy | (91345-A) | 8/11/37 | Sw S-1225 |
| 22 | I'm Nuts Over You | (91346-A) | 8/11/37 | Sw S-1225 |
| 23 | Friendless and Blue | (63417-A) | 31/3/38 | Sw S-1225 |
| 24 | Devil's Got the Blues | (63518-A) | 31/3/38 | Sw S-1225 |
| 25 | I Ain't Gonna Be Your Fool | (63519-A) | 31/3/38 | Sw S-1225 |
| 26 | Mr. Johnson Swing | (63520-A) | 31/3/38 | Sw S-1225 |
| 27 | New Falling Rain Blues | (63521-A) | 31/3/38 | Sw S-1225 |
| 28 | Laplegged Drunk Again | (63522-A) | 31/3/38 | Sw S-1225 |
| 29 | Blue Ghost Blues | (63523-A) | 31/3/38 | AH 158 |
| 30 | South Bound Backwater | (63524-A) | 31/3/38 | Sw S-1225 |
| 31 | Jersey Belle Blues | (044050-1) | 2/11/39 | RCA LPV-518 |
| 32 | Crowin' Rooster Blues | (059205-1) | 7/2/41 | RCA LPV-518 |

JOHLS Louise Johnson

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|---|-----------------------|-----------|---------|--------------|
| 1 | All Night Long Blues | (L-398-1) | 28/5/30 | OJL 11 |
| 2 | Long Way From Home | (L-399-2) | 28/5/30 | OJL 11 |
| 3 | On the Wall | (L-419-1) | 28/5/30 | Yz L-1028 |
| 4 | By the Moon and Stars | (L-420-2) | 28/5/30 | Mil MLP-2018 |

JOHM Margaret Johnson

- 1 If I Let You Get Away with It Once
You'll Do It All of the Time (71972-B)19/10/23 Sw S-1240
- 2 When a 'Gator Holler, Folk Say It's
a Sign of Rain (36846-1)20/10/26 Fwy FJ-2801

JOHMA Mary Johnson

- 1 Barrel House Flat Blues (L-176-2)c.2/30 CC 37
- 2 Key to the Mountain Blues (L-177-3)c.2/30 Jo SM-3098
- 3 Rattlesnake Blues (18791)22/9/32 Riv RM-8819
- 4 Mary Johnson Blues (18792)22/9/32 Riv RM-8819

JOHR Robert Johnson

- 1 Kind Hearted Woman Blues (SA-2580-1)23/11/36 Co CL-1654
- 2 Kind Hearted Woman Blues SA-2580-2)23/11/36 Co C-30034
- 3 I Believe I'll Dust My Broom SA-2581-1)23/11/36 Co C-30034
- 4 Sweet Home Chicago SA-2582-)23/11/36 OJL 17
- 5 Ramblin' On My Mind SA-2583-1)23/11/36 Co C-30034
- 6 Ramblin' On My Mind SA-2583-2)23/11/36 Co CL-1654
- 7 When You Got a Good Friend SA-2584-1)23/11/36 Co CL-1654
- 8 Come On In My Kitchen SA-2585-1)23/11/36 Co CL-1654
- 9 Terraplane Blues SA-2586-1)23/11/36 Co CL-1654
- 10 Phonograph Blues SA-2587-2)23/11/36 Co C-30034
- 11 32-20 Blues SA-2616-1)26/11/36 Co CL-1654
- 12 They're Red Hot SA-2627-1)27/11/36 Co C-30034
- 13 Dead Shrimp Blues SA-2628-2)27/11/36 Co C-30034
- 14 Cross Road Blues SA-2629-2)27/11/36 Co CL-1654
- 15 Walkin' Blues SA-2630-1)27/11/36 Co CL-1654
- 16 Last Fair Deal Gone Down SA-2631-1)27/11/36 Co CL-1654
- 17 Preachin' Blues SA-2632-1)27/11/36 Co CL-1654
- 18 Preachin' Blues SA-2632-2)27/11/36 Co C-30034
- 19 If I Had Possession Over Judgment
Day (SA-2633-1)27/11/36 Co CL-1654
- 20 Stones in My Passway (DAL-377-2)19/6/37 Co CL-1654
- 21 I'm a Steady Rollin Man (DAL-378-)19/6/37 OJL 17
- 22 From Four Until Late (DAL-379-1)19/6/37 Co C-30034
- 23 Hell Hound On My Trail (DAL-394-2)20/6/37 Co CL-1654
- 24 Little Queen of Spades (DAL-395-7)20/6/37 Co C-30034
- 25 Little Queen of Spades (DAL-395-7)20/6/37 His HLP-31
- 26 Malted Milk (DAL-396-1)20/6/37 Co C-30034
- 27 Drunken Hearted Man (DAL-397-1)20/6/37 Co C-30034
- 28 Drunken Hearted Man (DAL-397-2)20/6/37 Rt RL-314
- 29 Me and the Devil Blues (DAL-398-2)20/6/37 Co CL-1654
- 30 Stop Breakin' Down Blues (DAL-399-1)20/6/37 Co C-30034
- 31 Traveling Riverside Blues (DAL-400-2)20/6/37 Co CL-1654
- 32 Honeymoon Blues (DAL-401-)20/6/37 Co C-30034
- 33 Love In Vain (DAL-402-7)20/6/37 Co C-30034
- 34 Love In Vain (DAL-402-7)20/6/37 His HLP-31
- 35 Milkcow's Calf Blues (DAL-403-2)20/6/37 Yz L-1026
- 36 Milkcow's Calf Blues (DAL-403-3)20/6/37 Co CL-1654

JOHT T. C. Johnson

1	J. C. Johnson's Blues	(400250-B)16/2/28	Rt RL-316
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JOHTO Tommy Johnson

1	Cool Drink of Water Blues	(41836-2)3/2/28	OJL 8
2	Big Road Blues	(41837-2)3/2/28	Rt RL-330
3	Bye-Bye Blues	(41838-1)4/2/28	Yz L-1007
4	Maggie Campbell Blues	(41839-2)4/2/28	Rt RL-330
5	Canned Heat Blues	(45462-2)31/8/28	His HLP-31
6	Lonesome Home Blues	(45463-1)31/8/28	His HLP-31
7	Lonesome Home Blues	(45463-2)31/8/28	His HLP-31
8	Big Fat Mama Blues	(45465-1)31/8/28	Rt RL-330
9	Lonesome Home Blues	(L-230-2)c.1/30	Yz L-1007
10	Black Mare Blues	(L-245-2)c.1/30	Yz L-1007

JONAN Anna Jones

1	Trixie Blues	(1473-1)c.7/23	His HLP-15
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JONB "Bo" Jones

1	Back Door Blues	(DAL-460-)c.11/29	Rt RL-327
2	Leavenworth Prison Blues	(DAL-461-)c.11/29	Rt RL-327

JONCO Coley Jones

1	Sweet Mama Blues	(145344-3)6/12/27	Rt RL-312
2	Texas and Pacific Blues	(147566-1)5/12/28	His HLP-17
3	Drunkard's Special	(149558-2)6/12/29	Fwy FA-2951
4	The Elder's He's My Man	(149559-2)6/12/29	Rt RL-315

JONE Elijah Jones

1	Katy Fly	(020120-1)13/3/38	RCA INT-1175
2	Mean Actin' Mama	(020124-1)13/3/38	RCA INT-1175

JONJ Jake Jones

1	Monkeyin' Around	(DAL-473-)c.10/29	His HLP-2
2	Southern Sea Blues	(DAL-474-)c.10/29	His HLP-2

JONL Little Hat Jones

1	New Two Sixteen Blues	(402647-A)15/6/29	His HLP-32
2	Two String Blues	(402648-A)15/6/29	His HLP-32
3	Rolled From Side to Side Blues	(402698-A)21/6/29	Yz L-1010
4	Hurry Blues	(402699-A)21/6/29	Yz L-1010
5	Little Hat Blues	(402700-A)21/6/29	Yz L-1032
6	Corpus Blues	(402701-B)21/6/29	Rt RL-315
7	Bye Bye Baby Blues	(404198-B)14/6/30	Yz L-1004
8	Cross the Water Blues	(404199-B)14/6/30	Yz L-1032
9	Cherry Street Blues	(404300-A)14/6/30	Yz L-1032

JONM Maggie Jones

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|----|--|--------------------|------------|
| 1 | Four Flushing Papa | (140104-2)14/10/24 | VJM VLP-23 |
| 2 | Jealous Mama Blues | (140105-1)14/10/24 | VJM VLP-23 |
| 3 | Box Car Blues | (140134-3)13/11/24 | VJM VLP-23 |
| 4 | Western Union Blues | (140135-3)13/11/24 | VJM VLP-23 |
| 5 | Poor House Blues | (140171-2)9/12/24 | VJM VLP-23 |
| 6 | Anybody Here Want to Try My Cabbage | (140174-2)10/12/24 | VJM VLP-23 |
| 7 | Thunderstorm Blues | (140175-2)10/12/24 | VJM VLP-23 |
| 8 | If I Lose, Let Me Lose | (140187-1)47/12/24 | VJM VLP-23 |
| 9 | Scream'n' the Blues | (140188-1)17/12/24 | VJM VLP-23 |
| 10 | Good Time Flat Blues | (140191-2)17/12/24 | VJM VLP-23 |
| 11 | You May Go, But You'll Come Back
Some Day | (140192-2)18/12/24 | VJM VLP-23 |
| 12 | Early Every Morn' | (140193-2)18/12/24 | VJM VLP-23 |
| 13 | Dangerous Blues | (140489-3)1/4/25 | VJM VLP-23 |
| 14 | Suicide Blues | (140490-3)1/4/25 | VJM VLP-23 |
| 15 | Undertaker's Blues | (140533-2)16/4/25 | VJM VLP-23 |
| 16 | North Bound Blues | (140534-2)16/4/25 | VJM VLP-23 |
| 17 | Mama | (140584-1)5/5/25 | VJM VLP-25 |
| 18 | I'm a Back Bitin' Mama | (140951-4)17/9/25 | VJM VLP-25 |
| 19 | Dallas Blues | (140952-3)19/7/25 | VJM VLP-25 |
| 20 | Never Drive a Beggar From Your Door | (140965-3)18/9/25 | VJM VLP-25 |
| 21 | Single Woman's Blues | (141056-1)29/9/25 | VJM VLP-25 |
| 22 | Never Tell a Woman Friend | (141057-2)29/9/25 | VJM VLP-25 |
| 23 | The Man I Love Is Oh So Good | (142165-3)7/5/26 | VJM VLP-25 |
| 24 | I'm a Real Kind Mama | (142167-7)7/5/26 | VJM VLP-25 |

JORC Charley Jordan

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|----|----------------------------------|-------------------|-----------|
| 1 | Stack O' Dollars Blues | (C-5834-)c.6/30 | Yz L-1018 |
| 2 | Keep It Clean | (C-5836-)c.6/30 | Yz L-1030 |
| 3 | Big Four Blues | (C-5837-)c.6/30 | Yz L-1030 |
| 4 | Raidin' Squad Blues | (C-5840-)c.6/30 | Yz L-1030 |
| 5 | Hunkie Tunkie Blues | (C-5841-)c.6/30 | Yz L-1003 |
| 6 | Gasoline Blues | (C-6164-)19/9/30 | Yz L-1030 |
| 7 | Keep It Clean--No. 2 | (V0-141-)17/3/31 | Yz L-1003 |
| 8 | You Run and Tell Your Daddy | (V0-143-)17/3/31 | Yz L-1003 |
| 9 | Tight Haired Mama Blues | (V0-144-)17/3/31 | OJL 20 |
| 10 | I Couldn't Stay Here | (18980-)10/4/36 | Yz L-1021 |
| 11 | Got Your Water On | (18982-2)10/4/36 | Rt RL-310 |
| 12 | Don't Put Your Dirty Hands On Me | (18983-1)10/4/36 | Rt RL-310 |

JORL Luke Jordan

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|---|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| 1 | Church Bells Blues | (39819-1)16/8/27 | RCA INT-1175 |
| 2 | Church Bells Blues | (39819-2)16/8/27 | RBF RF-9 |
| 3 | Cocaine Blues | (39821-2)16/8/27 | Rt RL-326 |
| 4 | My Gal's Done Quit Me | (57703-1)18/11/29 | Rt RL-318 |

KELE Eddie Kelly

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|---|--------------------|------------------|----------|
| 1 | Poole County Blues | (013023-1)6/8/37 | RBF RF-9 |
| 2 | Shim Shaming | (013026-1)6/8/37 | BC 2 |

KELJ Jack Kelly

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|---|----------------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| 1 | Highway No. 61 Blues | (13712-1)1/8/33 | Rt RL-316 |
| 2 | Highway No. 61 Blues No. 2 | (13713)1/8/33 | Rt RL-329 |
| 3 | Red-Ripe Tomatoes | (13714-2)1/8/37 | OJL 4 |
| 4 | Believe I'll Go Back Home | (13715-2)1/8/33 | Rt RL-311 |
| 5 | Ko-Ko-Mo Blues | (13721-2)1/8/33 | Rt RL-311 |
| 6 | Cold Iron Bed | (13722-1)1/8/33 | OJL 4 |
| 7 | Betty Sue Blues | (MEM-143-1)14/7/39 | OJL 19 |
| 8 | Flower Blues | (MEM-144-1)14/7/39 | OJL 21 |
| 9 | Men Fooler Blues | (MEM-151-1)14/7/39 | OJL 19 |

KIDS Kid Stormy Weather

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|---|------------------|---------------------|------|
| 1 | Short Hair Blues | (JAX-179-2)17/10/35 | BC 7 |
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KING King David (David Crockett)

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|---|-------------------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| 1 | What's That Tastes Like Gravy | (404664-A)11/12/30 | RBF RF-6 |
| 2 | Rising Sun Blues | (404665-A)11/12/30 | RBF RF-6 |
| 3 | Sweet Potato Blues | (404666-B)11/12/30 | Rt RL-311 |
| 4 | I Can Deal Worry | (404668-A)11/12/30 | Rt RL-311 |

KYLE Charlie Kyle

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|---|----------------------|-----------------|-----------|
| 1 | Kyle's Worried Blues | (45468-2)1/9/28 | Yz L-1018 |
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LACY Rubin Lacy

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|---|------------------------------|---------------|-----------|
| 1 | Mississippi Jail House Groan | (20419-2)3/28 | OJL 8 |
| 2 | Ham Hound Grave | (20420-3)3/28 | Yz L-1009 |

LASK Louie Lasky

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|---|--------------------------------|-----------------|-----------|
| 1 | How You Want Your Rollin' Done | (C-915-C)2/4/35 | Her H-201 |
| 2 | Teasin' Brown Blues | (C-945-B)2/4/35 | Her H-201 |

LEDB Huddie Leadbetter (Leadbelly)

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|----|----------------------------------|------------------|---------------|
| 1 | Roberta--Part 1 | (16683-1)23/1/35 | Co C-30035 |
| 2 | Roberta--Part 2 | (16684-1)23/1/35 | Co C-30035 |
| 3 | Packin' Trunk Blues | (16685-1)23/1/35 | Rt RL-315 |
| 4 | C. C. Rider | (16686-1)23/1/35 | Co C-30035 |
| 5 | Honey, I'm All Out and Down | (16688-2)23/1/35 | Rt RL-315 |
| 6 | New Black Snake Moan | (16691-2)23/1/35 | Co C-30035 |
| 7 | Alberta | (16692-1)23/1/35 | Co C-30035 |
| 8 | Baby, Don't You Love Me No More? | (16693-1)24/1/35 | Co C-30035 |
| 9 | Death Letter Blues--Part 1 | (16695-1)24/1/35 | Bio BLP-12013 |
| 10 | Death Letter Blues--Part 2 | (16696-1)24/1/35 | Bio BLP-12013 |
| 11 | Kansas City Papa | (16697-1)24/1/35 | Bio BLP-12013 |
| 12 | Red River Blues | (16704-1)24/1/35 | Co C-30035 |
| 13 | My Friend Blind Lemon | (16807-1)5/2/35 | Co C-30035 |
| 14 | Mr. Tom Hughes' Town | (16808-1)5/2/35 | Co C-30035 |
| 15 | Shorty George | (16814-2)5/2/35 | Bio BLP-12013 |

LEDB (cont.)

16	Match Box Blues	(16877-)5/2/35	Co C-30035
17	Yellow Jacket	(17179-1)25/3/35	Bio BLP-12013
18	T. B. Woman Blues	(17180-1/2)25/3/35	Bio BLP-12013
19	Pig Meat Papa	(17181-2)25/3/35	His HLP-4
20	Bull Cow	(17182-)25/3/35	Co C-30035

LEEB Bertha Lee

1	Mind Reader Blues	(14736-1)31/1/34	OJL 17
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LEEX Bobby Leecan

1	Macon Georgia Cut-Out	()c.6/27	His HLP-17
2	Nobody KNOWS You When You're Down and Our	()c.6/27	His HLP-17

LEWAR Archie Lewis

1	Miss Handy Hanks	(19107)30/3/33	Rt RL-334
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LEWF Furry Lewis

1	Jellyroll	()28/5/27	RBF RF-11
2	Mr. Furry's Blues	()28/5/27	Rt RL-323
3	Sweet Papa Moan	()28/5/27	RBF RF-11
4	Good Looking Girl Blues	()c.10/27	Rt RL-329
5	Big Chief Blues	()c.10/27	Yz L-1002
6	Falling Down Blues	()c.10/27	OJL 21
7	Mean Old Bedbug Blues	()c.10/27	Rt RL-333
8	Why Don't You Come Home Blues	()c.10/27	Rt RL-333
9	Furry's Blues	(45424-1)28/8/28	Rt RL-333
10	I Will Turn Your Money Green	(45425-2)28/8/28	Yz L-1008
11	Mistreatin' Mama	(45428-2)28/8/28	Rt RL-323
12	Dry Land Blues	(45429-1)28/8/28	Yz L-1021
13	Judge Harsh Blues	(45433-2)28/8/28	Yz L-1008
14	Black Gypsy Blues	(M-185-)22/9/29	Yz L-1008
15	Creeper's Blues	(M-186-)22/9/29	Yz L-1008

LEWN Noah Lewis

1	Viola Lee Blues	(47066-1)20/9/28	OJL 21
2	Going to Germany	(56318-2)1/10/29	OJL 4
3	Pretty Mama Blues	(56342-2)3/10/29	RCA INT-1175
4	Ticket Agent Blues	(64736-)26/11/30	OJL 4
5	New Minglewood Blues	(64737-2)26/11/30	OJL 4
6	Bad Luck's My Buddy	(64739-)28/11/30	Rt RL-307

LINC Charley Lincoln (Charley Hicks)

1	Jealous Hearted Blues	(145103-2)4/11/27	RBF RF-9
2	Hard Luck Blues	(145104-2)4/11/27	His HLP-4

LINC (cont.)

3	Mojoe Blues	(145105-3)4/11/27	RBF RF-15
4	My Wife Drove Me From the Door	(145106-1)4/11/27	RBF RF-202
5	Country Breakdown	(145107-1)4/11/27	RBF RF-15
6	Chain Gang Trouble	(145108-2)4/11/27	His HLP-4
7	Doodle Hole Blues	(150275-2)18/4/30	Yz L-1012

LINT Joe Linthecome

1	Pretty Mama Blues	(15906-A)20/11/29	Rt RL-326
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LIST Virginia Liston

1	Rolls-Royce Papa	()29/5/26	His HLP-1
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LITS (Little) Son Joe (Ernest Lawlars)

1	Black Cat Swing	(C-4098-1)12/12/41	BC 1
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LOCK Robert Lockwood

1	Little Boy Blue	(064640-)30/7/41	BC 7
2	Take a Little Walk with Me	(064641-)30/7/41	Yz L-1038

LOFC Cripple Clarence Lofton

1	Monkey Man Blues	(C-948-A)2/4/35	Yz L-1015
2	Brown Skin Girls	(C-1074-A)19/7/35	Yz L-1025
3	I Don't Know	()c.1936-38	Yz L-1025
4	Change My Mind Blues	()c.1936-38	Yz L-1025
5	Streamline Train	()c.1936-38	Yz L-1025

LOFW Willie Lofton

1	Jake Leg Blues	(C-9386-A)24/8/34	Rt RL-314
2	My Mean Baby Blues	(C-9387-A)24/8/34	Rt RL-314
3	Dark Road Blues	(96257)1/11/35	Yz L-1007

LUCA Jane Lucas (Hannah May)

1	Pussy Cat Blues	(10031-2)15/9/30	Yz L-1035
2	Where Did You Stay Last Night?	(17277-A)19/11/30	Riv RM-8803
3	Fix It	(17278-A)19/11/30	Riv RM-8803
4	Double Trouble Blues	(17285)19/11/30	Yz L-1035
5	Leave My Man Alone	(17286)19/11/30	Yz L-1035

McCL Tommy McClennan

1	Brown Skin Girl	(044243-1)22/11/39	RCA LPV-518
2	Baby, Don't You Want to Go?	(044245-)22/11/39	Rt RL-305
3	New Highway No. 51	(044986-)10/5/40	RBF RF-202
4	She's Just Good-Huggin' Size	(044987-)10/5/40	Rt RL-305
5	My Little Girl	(044988-)10/5/40	Rt RL-305

McCL (cont.)

6	My Baby's Doggin' Me	(044991-)10/5/40	Rt RL-305
7	She's a Good Looking Mama	(044992-)10/5/40	Rt RL-305
8	Whiskey Head Man	(053736-)12/12/40	RBF RF-14
9	New Sugar Mama	(053737-)12/12/40	Rt RL-305
10	Down to Skin and Bones	(053738-)12/12/40	Rt RL-305
11	Katy Mae Blues	(053739-)12/12/40	Rt RL-305
12	Love with a Feeling	(053740-)12/12/40	Rt RL-305
13	Drop Down Mama	(053741-)12/12/40	Rt RL-305
14	Black Minnie	(053742-)12/12/40	Rt RL-305
15	Elsie Blues	(053743-)12/12/40	Rt RL-305
16	Cross Cut Saw Blues	(064885-)15/9/41	Rt RL-305
17	You Can't Read My Mind	(064887-)15/9/41	Rt RL-305
18	Deep Blue Sea Blues	(064889-)15/9/41	Rt RL-313
19	I'm a Guitar King	(064890-)15/9/41	RBF RF-1
20	It's a Cryin' Party	(064891-)15/9/41	Rt RL-305
21	Mozelle Blues	(074100-)20/2/42	Rt RL-314
22	Mr. So And So Blues	(074102-)20/2/42	Rt RL-314
23	Bluebird Blues	(074107-)20/2/42	RCA LPV-518
McCLI Lil McClintock			
1	Furniture Man	(151016-2)4/12/30	Rt RL-318
McCLU Matthew McClure			
1	Prisoner's Blues	(18798)22/9/32	Riv RM-8819
McCOC Charlie McCoy			
1	Last Time Blues	(M-176)c.22/9/29	Yz L-1001
2	That Lonesome Train Took My Baby Away	(404726-A)15/12/30	RBF RF-14
McCOJ Joe McCoy			
1	That Will Be Alright	(148708-3)18/6/29	Yz L-1021
2	Goin' Back to Texas	(148709-2)18/6/29	OJL 21
3	When the Levee Breaks	(148711-1)18/6/29	BC 1
4	I Don't Want No Woman I Have to Give My Money To	(C-5817-)c.6/30	Pal PL-101
5	I'm Wild About My Stuff	(C-5820-A)c.6/30	His HLP-32
6	My Mary Blues	(C-5830-)c.6/30	Pal PL-101
7	Cherry Ball Blues	(C-5864-A)c.6/30	Pal PL-101
8	Botherin' That Thing	(C-5865-A)c.6/30	His HLP-32
9	She Put Me Outdoors	(C-6011-)c.14/7/30	BC 13
10	Pile Drivin' Blues	(C-6012-)c.14/7/30	Yz L-1002
11	I Called You This Morning	(C-6013-)c.14/7/30	BC 13
12	Beat it Right	(C-7246-)c.31/1/31	Pal PL-101
13	Preachers Blues	(C-7247-)c.31/1/31	BC 13
14	Shake Mattie	(V0-109-A)c.2/31	Mam S-3803
15	My Wash Woman's Gone	(V0-110-A)c.2/31	Yz L-1026

McCOJ (cont.)

16	Joliet Bound	(11220-A)13/2/32	Yz L-1021
17	Someday I'll Be in the Clay	(C-9290)113/8/34	Rt RL-329
18	Evil Devil Woman Blues	(C-9299-A)16/8/34	BC 5
19	Going Back Home	(C-9300-A)16/8/34	Yz L-1007
20	You Got to Move--Part 1	(C-9380-)24/8/34	BC 1
21	Something Gonna Happen to You	(96262-)11/11/35	Yz L-1021
22	Oh! Red	(90691-A)18/4/36	AH 77
23	What You Gonna Do?	(90782-A)2/7/36	AH 77
24	Southern Blues	(90913-A)2/10/36	AH 77
25	The Garbage Man	(90914-A)2/10/36	AH 77
26	My Daddy Was a Movin' Man	(90949-A)22/10/36	AH 77
27	We Gonna Pitch a Boogie Woogie	(90982-A)13/11/36	AH 77
28	Hallelujah Joe Ain't Preachin' No More	(91074-A)14/1/37	AH 77
McCOR Robert Lee McCoy			
1	Tough Luck	(07655-1)5/5/37	Rt RL-321
2	Friar's Point Blues	(93037-A)5/6/40	Rt RL-319
McCOW William McCoy			
1	Central Tracks Blues	(147611-1)8/12/28	Yz L-1018
McFA Charlie "Specks" McFadden			
1	People People Blues	(L-154-1)c.2/30	Riv RM-8819
2	Groceries On the Shelf	(L-155-1)c.2/30	Riv RM-8819
McFAB Barrel House Buck MacFarland			
1	I Got to Go Blues	(C-9321-)20/8/34	OJL 20
MACKA Alura Mack			
1	West End Blues	(14847)1/3/29	His HLP-4
2	Wicked Daddy Blues	(14848)1/3/29	His HLP-4
McMU Fred McMullen			
1	Wait and Listen	(12313-1)16/1/33	Yz L-1012
2	De Kalb Chain Blues	(12936-)18/1/33	BC 5
MACON Ed Macon (Eddie Anthony)			
1	Wringing That Thing	(402289-A)12/3/29	Me1 MLP-7324
McPB Black-Bottom McPhail			
1	Down in Black Bottom	(11512-A)17/3/32	Yz L-1019
2	My Dream Blues	(11513-A)17/3/32	Yz L-1019
3	Whiskey Man Blues	(11514-A)17/3/32	Yz L-1019

McTW Blind Willie Mc Tell

1	Writin' Paper Blues	(40308-1)18/10/27	Yz L-1005
2	Stole Rider Blues	(40309-2)18/10/27	Yz L-1037
3	Mama, 'Tain't Long Fo' Day	(40310-1)18/10/27	Yz L-1005
4	Mr. McTell 'Got the Blues	(40311-2)18/10/27	RCA INT-1175
5	Three Women Blues	(47185-2)17/10/28	Yz L-1005
6	Statesboro Blues	(47187-3)17/10/28	Yz L-1005
7	Atlanta Strut	(149299-2)30/10/29	Yz L-1037
8	Travelin' Blues	(149300-1)30/10/29	Yz L-1005
9	Come On Around to My House Mama	(149302-2)30/10/29	Rt RL-324
10	Kind Mama	(149319-2)31/10/29	Yz L-1037
11	Drive Away Blues	(56599-1)26/11/29	Yz L-1005
12	Love-Changing Blues	(56635-1)29/11/29	Yz L-1005
13	Talking to Myself	(150257-2)17/4/30	Yz L-1005
14	Razor Ball	(150258-2)17/4/30	Yz L-1037
15	Southern Can Is Mine	(151904-1)23/10/31	Yz L-1005
16	Broke Down Engine Blues	(151905-1)23/10/31	Yz L-1005
17	Stomp Down Rider	(405002-1)23/10/31	Yz L-1005
18	Scarey Day Blues	(405003-1)23/10/31	Yz L-1037
19	Georgia Rag	(405085-1)31/10/31	Yz L-1005
20	Rollin' Mama Blues	(71603-1)22/2/32	Rt RL-324
21	Searching the Desert for the Blues	(71606-1)22/2/32	RCA LPV-518
22	Warm It Up to Me	(14008-2)14/9/33	Yz L-1005
23	It's a Good Little Thing	(14010-1)14/9/33	Yz L-1037
24	Savannah Mama	(14035-1)18/9/33	Yz L-1005
25	Broke Down Engine	(14036-2)18/9/33	RBF RF-15
26	My Baby's Gone	(14038-2)18/9/33	Yz L-1037
27	Death Cell Blues	(14049-1)19/9/33	RBF RF-15
28	B and O Blues No. 2	(14066-1)21/9/33	Yz L-1037
29	Weary Hearted Blues	(14067-1)21/9/33	Rt RL-324
30	Southern Can Mama	(14069-2)21/9/33	Yz L-1037
31	Runnin' Me Crazy	(14070-1)21/9/33	Rt RL-324
32	Bell Street Blues	(C-9946-A)23/4/35	Rt RL-324
33	Ticket Agent Blues	(C-9954-A)25/4/35	Yz L-1037
34	Cold Winter Day	(C-9956-A)25/4/35	Yz L-1037
35	Your Time to Worry	(C-9957-A)25/4/35	Rt RL-324

MANN Leola Manning

1	The Blues Is All Wrong	(K-8089-)c.4/30	Yz L-1015
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MARTC Carl Martin

1	Farewell to You Baby	(C-877-1)8/1/35	Yz L-1016
2	Badly Mistreated Man	(C-881-2)8/1/35	Yz L-1016
3	Good Morning, Judge	(C-882-)8/1/35	OJL 18
4	Joe Louis Blues	(90293-A)4/9/35	Yz L-1016
5	Let's Have a New Deal	(90294-A)4/9/35	BC 14

MARTD Daisy Martin

1	Feelin' Blue	(5237-1)c.7/23	VJM VLP-40
2	What You Was You Used to Be	(5238-1)c.7/23	VJM VLP-40

MARTS Sara Martin

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|---|-----------------------|-----------|----------|------------|
| 1 | Blind Man Blues | (71711-8) | c.1/8/23 | Sw S-1240 |
| 2 | Death Sting Me Blues | (278-?) | 11/28 | BYG 529073 |
| 3 | Mistreating Man Blues | (365) | 12/28 | BYG 529073 |

MASH Moses Mason (Red Hot Old Man Mose)

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|---|------------|-----------|--------|-----------|
| 1 | Molly Man | (20283-2) | c.1/28 | OJL 8 |
| 2 | Shrimp Man | (20302-3) | c.1/28 | Rt RL-325 |

MEMM Memphis Minnie

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|----|--|-------------|------------|------------|
| 1 | Go'in' Back to Texas | (148709-2) | 18/6/29 | OJL 21 |
| 2 | 'Frisco Town | (148710-2) | 18/6/29 | Yz L-1008 |
| 3 | I'm Talking About You | (MEM-772-A) | 20/2/30 | Pal PL-101 |
| 4 | Bumble Bee | (MEM-773-) | 20/2/30 | His HLP-2 |
| 5 | I'm Going Back Home | (59992-) | 26/5/30 | His HLP-32 |
| 6 | Bumble Bee Blues | (59993-2) | 26/5/30 | BC 7 |
| 7 | Meningitis Blues | (59994-) | 26/5/30 | Rt RL-337 |
| 8 | Don't Want No Woman | (62539-) | 29/5/30 | Pal PL-101 |
| 9 | Georgia Skin | (62540-) | 29/5/30 | His HLP-32 |
| 10 | I Don't Want No Woman I Have to
Give My Money To | (C-5817-) | c.6/30 | Pal PL-101 |
| 11 | Memphis Minnie-Jitis Blues | (C-5822-) | c.6/30 | BC 13 |
| 12 | Plymouth Rock Blues | (C-5831-) | c.6/30 | BC 13 |
| 13 | New Dirty Dozens | (C-5894-) | 1/7/30 | BC 13 |
| 14 | New Bumble Bee | (C-5895-) | 1/7/30 | BC 13 |
| 15 | I'm Talking About You--No. 2 | (C-6010-A) | c.14/7/30 | His HLP-2 |
| 16 | She Put Me Outdoors | (C-6011-) | c.14/7/30 | BC 13 |
| 17 | I Called You This Morning | (C-6013-) | c.14/7/30 | BC 13 |
| 18 | Grandpa and Grandma Blues | (C-6082-) | 9/9/30 | OJL 4 |
| 19 | Garage Fire Blues | (C-6083-) | 9/9/30 | Rt RL-307 |
| 20 | What's the Matter With the Mill? | (C-6442-) | c.15/10/30 | BC 13 |
| 21 | North Memphis Blues | (C-6443-) | c.15/10/30 | BC 13 |
| 22 | I Don't Want That Junk Outa You | (VO-111-A) | c.30/1/31 | Yz L-1008 |
| 23 | Crazy Cryin' Blues | (VO-112-A) | c.30/1/31 | BC 13 |
| 24 | Soo Cow Soq | (VO-151-A) | 25/3/31 | Yz L-1021 |
| 25 | After While Blues | (VO-152-A) | 25/3/31 | BC 13 |
| 26 | Where Is My Good Man | (11216-A) | 3/2/32 | OJL 6 |
| 27 | Ain't No Use Trying to Tell On Me
(I Know Something On You) | (152537-2) | 27/10/33 | Yz L-1021 |
| 28 | Stinging Snake Blues | (CP-1069-1) | 25/3/34 | Pal PL-101 |
| 29 | Drunken Barriehouse Blues | (CP-1070-1) | 25/3/34 | Yz L-1021 |
| 30 | You Got to Move--Part I | (C-9380-) | 24/8/34 | BC 1 |
| 31 | Chickasaw Train Blues | (C-9382-) | 24/8/34 | Cor CP-58 |
| 32 | Squat It | (C-9426-A) | 10/9/34 | Rt RL-329 |
| 33 | Dirty Mother For You | (C-9641-A) | 10/1/35 | Pal PL-101 |
| 34 | You Can't Give It Away | (C-9644-A) | 10/1/35 | Pal PL-101 |
| 35 | Reachin' Pete | (90018-) | 27/5/35 | Mam S-3803 |
| 36 | He's In the Ring | (C-1099-B) | 22/8/35 | Pal PL-101 |
| 37 | Black Cat Blues | (C-1386-1) | 27/5/36 | Pal PL-101 |
| 38 | Man You Won't Give Me No Money | (C-1388-2) | 27/5/36 | BC 1 |

MEMM (cont.)

39	Moonshine	(C-1670-1)12/11/36	BC 1
40	It's Hard to Be Mistreated	(C-1671-1)12/11/36	BC 1
41	My Baby Don't Want Me No More	(C-1936-1)17/6/37	BC 1
42	Lonesome Shark Blues	(WC-3166-A)27/6/40	BC 1
43	Nothin in Rambling	(WC-3167-A)27/6/40	BC 1
44	Boy Friend Blues	(WC-3168-A)27/6/40	BC 1
45	It's Hard to Please My Man	(WC-3k70-A)27/6/40	BC 1
46	In My Girlish Days	(C-3764-1)21/5/41	BC 1
47	Me and My Chauffeur Blues	(C-3765-1)21/5/41	BC 1

MILEL Lizzie Miles

1	Shootin' Star Blues	(7708-2)4/1/28	VLM VLP-40
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MILLL Lillian Miller

1	Dead Drunk Blues	(13718-A)c.3/5/28	OJL 6
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MILLS Sodarisa Miller

1	Sunshine Special	(2092-?)c.4/25	Mil MLP-2018
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MISSM Mississippi Moaner (Isaiah Nettles)

1	Mississippi Moan	(JAX-201-1)20/10/35	Yz L-1009
2	It's Cold in China Blues	(JAX-202-1)20/10/35	OJL 8

MONTE Eurreal "Little Brother" Montgomery

1	The Woman I Love Blues	(94418-1)10/8/35	CC 35
2	Pleading Blues	(94419-1)10/8/35	CC 35
3	Vicksburg Blues No. 2	(94420-1)10/8/35	Yz L-1028
4	Mama You Don't Mean Me No Good	(94421-1)10/8/35	CC 35
5	The First Time I Met You	(02642-1)16/10/36	RBF RF-12
6	Vicksburg Blues--Part 3	(02645-1)16/10/36	CC 35
7	Out West Blues	(02649-1)16/10/36	CC 35
8	Leaving Town Blues	(02650-1)16/10/36	CC 35
9	West Texas Blues	(02651-1)16/10/36	CC 35
10	Never Go Wrong Blues	(02652-1)16/10/36	CC 35
11	Mistreatin' Woman Blues	(02654-1)16/10/36	CC 35

MOOA Whistlin' Alex Moore

1	West Texas Woman	(149531-2)5/12/29	His HLP-32
2	It Wouldn't Be So Hard	(149562-2)6/12/29	His HLP-32

MOOAL Alice Moore

1	Black and Evil Blues	(15447)16/8/29	CC 37
2	Prison Blues	(15448)16/8/29	CC 37
3	My Man Blues	(15449-A)16/8/29	CC 37

MOAL (cont.)

4	Broadway St. Woman Blues	(15452)16/8/29	CC 37
5	Lonesome Dream Blues	(L-170-2)c.2/30	CC 37
6	Kid Man Blues	(L-171-2)c.2/30	CC 37
7	Black Evil Blues	(C-9317-A)18/8/34	OJL 20

MOOM Monette Moore

1	Black Hearse Blues	(31777)c.1/25	VJM VLP-40
2	Scandal Blues	(31779)c.1/25	VJM VLP-40

MOOP (Kid) Prince Moore

1	Bug Juice Blues	(18971-2)8/4/36	Rt RL-340
2	Honey Dripping Papa	(18999-2)11/4/36	Rt RL-340

MOOR Rosie Mae Moore

1	Staggering Blues	(41830-2)3/2/28	Rt RL-310
2	Ha-Ha Blues	(41831-1)3/2/28	Her H-201
3	School Girl Blues	(41832-2)3/2/28	OJL 17
4	Stranger Blues	(41833-2)3/2/28	OJL 6
5	Mad Dog Blues	(NOR-760)c.12/28	Rt RL-329

MOOW William Moore

1	One Way Gal	(20309-1)c.1/28	OJL 8
2	Midnight Blues	(20312-2)c.1/28	Rt RL-340

MORAH Herb Morand

1	Root Hog Or Die	(62661-A)6/10/37	AH 77
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MOSSB Buddy Moss

1	Daddy Don't Care	(12908-1)16/1/33	RBF RF-15
2	Hard Road Blues	(12946-1)19/1/33	RBF RF-15
3	Gravy Server	(17981-)21/8/35	Rt RL-318

NELSR Romeo Nelson

1	Gettin' Dirty Just Shakin' That Thing	(C-4629-)9/10/29	OJL 15
2	Dyin' Rider Blues	(C-4752-)26/11/29	RBF RF-12

NELSS Sonny Boy Nelson

1	Street Walkin'	(02599-1)15/10/36	Yz L-1038
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NELST Blue Coat Tom Nelson

1	Blue Coat Blues	(400258-B)17/2/28	Rt RL-316
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NEWB Hambone Willie Newbern

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|---|---|-------------------|------------|
| 1 | She Could Toodle-Do | (402295-A)13/3/29 | Rt RL-323 |
| 2 | Nobody Knows | (402296-B)13/3/29 | Rt RL-307 |
| 3 | Shelby County Workhouse Blues | (402297-B)13/3/29 | RBF RF-202 |
| 4 | Hambone Willie's Dreamy-Eyed
Woman's Blues | (402305-B)14/3/29 | OJL 17 |
| 5 | Roll and Tumble Blues | (402306-B)14/3/29 | OJL 17 |

NICK Charlie "Bozo" Nickerson

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|---|---|-------------------|--------------|
| 1 | Everybody's Talking About Sadie
Green | (59917-2)12/5/30 | Jo SM-3104 |
| 2 | Cave Man Blues | (59962-2)21/5/30 | Me1 MLP-7324 |
| 3 | It Won't Act Right | (59964-2)21/5/30 | Jo SM-3104 |
| 4 | Going Back to Memphis | (62583-)5/6/30 | Jo SM-3104 |
| 5 | Got a Letter From My Darlin' | (64731-)26/11/30 | Rt RL-337 |
| 6 | You May Leave But This Will Bring
You Back | (64733-)26/11/30 | Rt RL-337 |
| 7 | Round and Round | (64732-)26/11/30 | Jo SM-3104 |
| 8 | Move That Thing | (64740-2)28/11/30 | Rt RL-323 |
| 9 | You Got Me Rollin' | (64741-2)28/11/30 | Rt RL-323 |

NOBL George Noble

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|---|--------------------|------------------|-----------|
| 1 | The Seminole Blues | (C-897-2)11/2/35 | Yz L-1028 |
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ODEN Jimmy Oden

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|---|-----------------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| 1 | I Have Made Up My Mind | (18795)22/9/32 | Riv RM-8819 |
| 2 | Sitting Down Thinking Blues | (18796)22/9/32 | Riv RM-8819 |
| 3 | Going Down Slow | (070409-1)11/11/41 | RBF RF-16 |

OWEG "Big Boy" George Owens

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|---|--------------------|--------------|-----------|
| 1 | Kentucky Blues | (12571)10/26 | Yz L-1018 |
| 2 | The Coon Crap Game | (12579)10/26 | Rt RL-334 |

OWEN Marshall Owens

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|---|----------------------|------------------|-----------|
| 1 | Texas Blues | (L-1238-2)c.1/32 | Yz L-1006 |
| 2 | Try Me One More Time | (L-1240-1)c.1/32 | Yz L-1006 |

PALM Sylvester Palmer

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|---|-----------------|--------------------|-----------|
| 1 | Broke Man Blues | (403305-B)15/11/29 | RBF RF-12 |
|---|-----------------|--------------------|-----------|

PATT Charley Patton

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|---|-------------------------------|----------------|-----------|
| 1 | Mississippi Bo Weavil Blues | (15211)14/6/29 | Yz L-1020 |
| 2 | Screamin' and Hollerin' Blues | (15214)14/6/29 | Yz L-1020 |
| 3 | Down the Dirt Road Blues | (15215)14/6/29 | Yz L-1020 |
| 4 | Pony Blues | (15216)14/6/29 | Yz L-1020 |

PATT (cont.)

5	Banty Rooster Blues	(15217)14/6/29	Yz L-1020
6	It Won't Be Long	(15220)14/6/29	Yz L-1020
7	Pea Vine Blues	(15221-A)14/6/29	Yz L-1001
8	Tom Rushen Blues	(15222-A)14/6/29	Yz L-1020
9	Going to Move to Alabama	(L-37-1)c.11/29	Yz L-1020
10	Devil Sent the Rain	(L-40-1)c.11/29	Yz L-1009
11	Green River Blues	(L-44-3)c.11/29	Yz L-1020
12	Hammer Blues	(L-47-2)c.11/29	Yz L-1020
13	When Your Way Gets Dark	(L-49-1)c.11/29	Yz L-1020
14	Heart Like Railroad Steel	(L-50-1)c.11/29	Her H-201
15	High Water Everywhere--Part I	(L-59-1)c.12/29	Yz L-1020
16	High Water Everywhere--Part II	(L-60-2)c.12/29	Yz L-1020
17	Rattlesnake Blues	(L-63-2)c.12/29	Yz L-1020
18	Mean Black Moan	(L-77-1)c.12/29	Yz L-1001
19	Cry Well Blues	(L-429-2)c.28/5/30	Yz L-1020
20	Moon Going Down	(L-432-1)c.28/5/30	Yz L-1020
21	Bird Nest Bound	(L-433-1)c.28/5/30	Yz L-1020
22	Jersey Bull Blues	(14723-)30/1/34	Mam S-3802
23	High Sheriff Blues	(14725-2)30/1/34	Yz L-1020
24	Stone Pony Blues	(14727-1)30/1/34	Yz L-1020
25	34 Blues	(14739-1)31/1/34	Yz L-1020
26	Love My Stuff	(14746-)31/1/34	Mam S-3802
27	Revenue Man Blues	(14747-)31/1/34	Yz L-1020
28	Poor Me	(14757-1)1/2/34	Yz L-1020

PERKG Gertrude Perkins

1	No Easy Rider Blues	(145340-1)6/12/27	Fwy FJ-2802
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PETT Arthur Petties/Pettis

1	Two Time Blues	(41906-2)14/2/28	Yz L-1007
2	Out On Santa Fe--Blues	(41907-2)14/2/28	Rt RL-314
3	Good Boy Blues	(C-5921-8)c.2/7/30	Yz L-1038

PETW Robert Petway

1	Catfish Blues	(059476-1)28/3/41	Yz L-1038
2	Bertha Lee Blues	(074108-1)20/2/42	RBF RF-14
3	My Baby Left Me	(074114-1)20/2/42	Rt RL-314
4	Cotton Pickin' Blues	(074115-1)20/2/42	Rt RL-314

PICK Charlie Pickett

1	Crazy 'Bout My Back Gal	(62467-A)2/8/37	Rt RL-310
2	Let Me Squeeze Your Lemon	(62487-A)3/8/37	RBF RF-9
3	Down the Highway	(62488-A)3/8/37	RBF RF-202

POOJ Poor Jab (Jab Jones)

1	Whitewash Station Blues	(47036-2)15/9/28	RBF RF-6
2	Stealin' Stealin'	(47037-2)15/9/28	RBF RF-1
3	Come Along Little Children	(18656)3/8/32	Rt RL-307

POPE Jenny Pope

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|---|---------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| 1 | Whiskey Drinkin' Blues | (M-193-)c.23/9/29 | Hls HLP-1 |
| 2 | Doggin' Me Around Blues | (M-194-)c.23/9/29 | Hls HLP-1 |
| 3 | Bull Frog Blues | (MEM-757-A)x.2/30 | Hls HLP-15 |
| 4 | Tennessee Workhouse Blues | (MEM-758-B)c.2/30 | Hls HLP-15 |

PULL Joe Pullum

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|---|---|-----------------|-----------|
| 1 | Black Gal What Makes Your Head
So Hard?--No. 2 | (82786-?)3/4/34 | Rt RL-327 |
|---|---|-----------------|-----------|

RACH James "Yank" Rachel

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|---|--------------------------|------------------|-------------|
| 1 | Little Sarah | (55597-2)26/9/29 | Rt RL-310 |
| 2 | T-Bone Steak Blues | (56336-2)2/10/29 | Rt RL-310 |
| 3 | Expressman Blues | (59934-)17/5/30 | Fwy FA-2953 |
| 4 | Sweet Mama | (62550)30/5/30 | Rt RL-329 |
| 5 | Squeaky Work Bench Blues | (14792-2)6/2/34 | Yz L-1021 |
| 6 | Gravel Road Woman | (14793-2)6/2/34 | OJL 21 |

RAIN Ma (Gertrude) Rainey

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|----|------------------------------|------------------|--------------|
| 1 | Bad Luck Blues | (1596-2)12/23 | BYG 529.078 |
| 2 | Bo-Weavil Blues | (1597-?)12/23 | BYG 529.078 |
| 3 | Barrel House Blues | (1598-2)12/23 | BYG 529.078 |
| 4 | Those All Night Long Blues | (1599-?)12/23 | BYG 529.078 |
| 5 | Moonshine Blues | (1608-?)12/23 | BYG 529.078 |
| 6 | Last Minute Blues | (1609-2)12/23 | BYG 529.078 |
| 7 | Southern Blues | (1612-2)12/23 | BYG 529.078 |
| 8 | Walking Blues | (1613-2)12/23 | BYG 529.078 |
| 9 | Lost Wandering Blues | (1698-2)c.3/24 | BYG 529.078 |
| 10 | Dream Blues | (1699-1)c.3/24 | BYG 529.078 |
| 11 | Honey Where You Been So Long | (1701-2)c.3/24 | BYG 529.078 |
| 12 | Ya-Da-Do | (1702-?)c.3/24 | BYG 529.078 |
| 13 | Those Dogs of Mine | (1703-1)c.3/24 | BYG 529.078 |
| 14 | Lucky Rock Blues | (1704-2)c.3/24 | BYG 529.078 |
| 15 | Jealous Hearted Blues | (1924-2)15/10/24 | Mil MLP-2001 |
| 16 | Cell Bound Blues | (10001-2)c.11/24 | Mil MLP-2001 |
| 17 | Army Camp Harmony Blues | (2136-1)5/25 | Mil MLP-2001 |
| 18 | Explaining the Blues | (2137-1)5/25 | Mil MLP-2001 |
| 19 | Rough and Tumble Blues | (2210-2)c.8/25 | Mil MLP-2001 |
| 20 | Night Time Blues | (2211-1)c.8/25 | Mil MLP-2001 |
| 21 | Four Day Honory Scat | (2213-1)c.8/25 | Mil MLP-2001 |
| 22 | Memphis Bound Blues | (2214-2)c.8/25 | Mil MLP-2001 |
| 23 | Slave to the Blues | (2369-2)1/26 | Mil MLP-2001 |
| 24 | Bessemer Bound Blues | (2373-2)1/26 | Mil MLP-2001 |
| 25 | Oh My Babe Blues | (2374-1)1/26 | Jo SM-3098 |
| 26 | Down In the Basement | (2627-1)c.8/26 | Jo SM-3098 |
| 27 | Trust No Man | (2631-1)c.8/26 | Jo SM-3098 |
| 28 | Gone Daddy Blues | (4694-2)c.8/27 | Mil MLP-2001 |
| 29 | Misery Blues | (4707-1)c.8/27 | Fwy FU-2802 |
| 30 | Slow Driving Moan | (4709-1)c.8/27 | Mil MLP-2001 |
| 31 | Black Eye Blues | (20898-1)c.9/28 | Yz L-1039 |

RAME	Ben Ramey		
1	I Can't Stand It	(55529-1)17/9/29	Rt RL-322
2	Tired of You Driving Me	(56344)3/10/29	Rt RL-337
3	Cocaine Habit Blues	(59933-2)17/6/30	BC 2
RANG	Jack Ranger		
1	T. P. Window Blues	(402768)28/6/29	Rt RL-315
REDN	Red Nelson (Nelson Wilborn)		
1	Crying Mother Blues	(90597-A)4/2/36	Br 87.504
2	Sweetest Thing Born	(90605-A)6/2/36	Cor CP-58
REEDW	Willie Reed		
1	Dreaming Blues	(147600-2)8/12/28	Yz L-1004
2	Texas Blues	(147601-1)8/12/28	Yz L-1010
3	Leavin' Home	(149544-1)5/12/29	Hls-HLP-17
REYJ	Blind Joe Reynolds		
1	Outside Woman Blues	(L-144-3)c.2/30	OJL 8
2	Nehi Blues	(L-146-2)c.2/30	OJL 11
REYW	Blind Willie Reynolds		
1	Married Man Blues	(64721-2)26/11/30	Yz L-1009
2	Third Street Woman Blues	(64724-2)26/11/30	OJL 11
RHOW	Walter Rhodes		
1	The Crowing Rooster	(145358-2)10/12/27	Rt RL-334
2	Leaving Home Blues	(145359-2)10/12/27	Rt RL-334
RICHM	"Mooch" Richardson		
1	T and T Blues	(400213-B)13/2/28	Mam S-3803
2	"Mooch" Richardson's Low Down		
	Barrel House Blues Part 1	(400215-A)13/2/28	Mam S-3803
3	Burying Ground Blues	(400375-A)29/3/28	Mam S-3803
ROBB	Bob Robinson		
1	Selling That Stuff	(21035-3)c.12/28	Riv RM-8803
2	Beedle Um Bum	(21036-2)c.12/28	Riv RM-8803
ROLW	Walter Roland		
1	T Model Blues	(13552-1)17/7/33	Yz L-1017
2	Dices' Blues	(15485-2)30/7/34	RBF RF-12
3	Early in the Morning No. 2	(15495-2)31/7/34	Yz L-1017

ROLW (cont.)

4	Big Mama	(15520-2)2/8/34	RBF RF-12
5	Every Morning Blues	(15521-2)2/8/34	BC 7
6	45 Pistol Blues	(17081-2)14/3/35	BC 7
7	Penniless Blues	(17153-2)20/3/35	Yz L-1017

RUPO Ollie Rupert

1	I Raised My Window and Looked at the Risin' Sun	(37963-2)28/2/27	Rt RL-323
2	Ain't Goin' to Be Your Low Down Dog	(37964-2)28/2/27	Rt RL-323

SCHA Ed Schaffer (Shreveport Home Wreckers)

1	Fence Breakin' Blues	(59965-2)21/5/30	Yz L-1026
2	Home Wreckin' Blues	(59966-2)21/5/30	Rt RL-313

SCOTS Sonny Scott

J	Red Cross Blues	(13572-1)18/7/33	Rt RL-325
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SCRU Irene Scruggs

1	My Back to the Wall	(16975-A)30/8/30	Yz L-1026
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SHAD

1	Sometimes I Think I Love You	(38657-1)9/6/27	OJL 19
2	Memphis Boy--Blues	(38659-1)9/6/27	Rt RL-337
3	I Packed My Suitcase, Started to the Train	(40312-1)19/10/27	Rt RL-311
4	State of Tennessee	(40313-2)19/10/27	Rt RL-322
5	Kansas City Blues	(40315-1)19/10/27	Rt RL-307
6	Evergreen Money Blues	(41818-2)1/2/28	Rt RL-310
7	She Stays Out All Night Long	(41891-1)13/2/28	RCA INT-1175
8	She Stays Out All Night Long	(41891-2)13/2/28	Rt RL-322
9	A Black Woman Is Like a Black Snake	(47010-2)11/9/28	Rt RL-322
10	On the Road Again	(47011-1)11/9/28	OJL 19
11	Whitewash Station Blues	(47036-2)15/9/28	Rt RL-337
12	Stealin' Stealin'	(47037-2)15/9/28	Rt RL-337
13	Better Leave That Stuff Alone	(47092-)24/9/28	Mam S-3803
14	What's the Matter?	(55530-2)17/9/29	Jo SM-3104
15	Feed Your Friend with a Long Handled Spoon	(55598-1)27/9/29	Rt RL-311
16	I Can Beat You Plenty	(55599-)27/9/29	Rt RL-337
17	Taking Your Place	(56343)3/10/29	Jo SM-3104
18	Oh Ambulance Man	(59932-2)17/5/30	Me1 MLP-7324
19	Jim Strainer	(59961-2)21/5/30	Rt RL-337
20	Mary Anna Cut Off	(C-780-2)6/11/34	Jo SM-3104
21	Take Your Fingers Off It	(C-793-)7/11/34	Jo SM-3104
22	She Done Sold It Out	(C-800-1)7/11/34	RBF RF-6

SHAW Allen Shaw

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|---|-----------------------|------------------|-----------|
| 1 | Coldest Stuff in Town | (15952-)14/9/34 | Yz L-1021 |
| 2 | I Couldn't Help It | (15967-1)17/9/34 | OJL 21 |
| 3 | Moanin' the Blues | (15978-1)18/9/34 | Yz L-1002 |

SHOR Jaydee Short

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|---|----------------------------|-------------------|-----------|
| 1 | Telephone Arguin' Blues | (L-456-1)c.1/6/30 | OJL 11 |
| 2 | Lonesome Swamp Rattlesnake | (L-468-1)c.1/6/30 | OJL 11 |
| 3 | Snake Doctor Blues | (11474-)14/3/32 | Yz L-1003 |
| 4 | Barefoot Blues | (11475-)14/3/32 | Yz L-1003 |
| 5 | Grand Daddy Blues | (11479-A)14/3/32 | Yz L-1018 |

SIMP Coletha Simpson

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|---|------------------|-------------------|-----------|
| 1 | Down South Blues | (C-3299)c.16/4/29 | His HLP-1 |
|---|------------------|-------------------|-----------|

SIMSH Henry Sims

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|---|-------------------|-----------------|-------|
| 1 | Farrell Blues | (L-45-1)c.11/29 | OJL 8 |
| 2 | Tell Me Man Blues | (L-65-1)c.12/29 | OJL 2 |

SLUE Sluefoot Joe

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|---|---------------------|---------------|------------|
| 1 | Tootin' Out Blues | (490-A)c.4/29 | His HLP-17 |
| 2 | Shouting Baby Blues | ()c.4/29 | His HLP-17 |

SMIA . . . Smith (Smith and Harper)

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|---|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|
| 1 | Insurance Policy Blues | (AUG-126-3)26-27/6/36 | Rt RL-334 |
|---|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|

SMID Bessie Smith

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|----|-------------------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| 1 | Down Hearted Blues | (80863-5)16/2/23 | Co CL-855 |
| 2 | I'm Going Back to My Used To Be | (81262-2)4/10/23 | VJM VLP-16 |
| 3 | Jail-House Blues | (81226-2)21/9/23 | Co CL-855 |
| 4 | Ticket Agent Ease Your Window Down | (81670-2)5/4/24 | Co CL-855 |
| 5 | Weeping Willow Blues | (140062-2)26/9/24 | Co CL-856 |
| 6 | The St. Louis Blues | (140241-1)14/1/25 | Co CL-855 |
| 7 | Reckless Blues | (140242-1)14/1/25 | Co CL-855 |
| 8 | Sobbin' Hearted Blues | (140249-2)14/1/25 | Co CL-855 |
| 9 | Cold In Hand Blues | (140250-2)14/1/25 | Co CL-855 |
| 10 | You've Been a Good Ole Wagon | (140251-1)14/1/25 | Co CL-855 |
| 11 | J. C. Holmes Blues | (140629-2)27/5/25 | Co CL-855 |
| 12 | The Yellow Dog Blues | (140586-2)6/5/25 | Co CL-857 |
| 13 | Nashville Women's Blues | (140625-2)26/5/25 | Co CL-855 |
| 14 | I Ain't Goin' to Play Second Fiddle | (140630-1)27/5/25 | Co CL-858 |
| 15 | Jazzbo Brown from Memphis Town | (141819-2)18/3/26 | Co CL-856 |
| 16 | The Gin House Blues | (141820-3)18/3/26 | Co CL-856 |
| 17 | Baby Doll | (142147-2)4/5/26 | Co CL-857 |
| 18 | Lost Your Head Blues | (142149-2)4/5/26 | Co CL-857 |
| 19 | One and Two Blues | (142876-2)26/10/26 | Co CL-857 |
| 20 | Young Woman's Blues | (142878-3)26/10/26 | Co CL-857 |

SMIB (cont.)

21	Preachin'-the Blues	(143490-2)17/2/27	Co CL-858
22	Back Water Blues	(143491-4)17/2/27	Co CL-858
23	After You've Gone	(143567-2)2/3/27	Co CL-857
24	Trombone Cholly	(143575-3)3/3/27	Co CL-858
25	Send Me to the 'Lectric Chair	(143576-2)3/3/27	Co CL-858
26	Mean Old Bed Bug Blues	(144796-3)27/9/27	Fwy FJ-2802
27	Empty Bed Blues--Part 7	(145787-1)20/3/28	Co CL-858
28	Poor Man's Blues	(146895-1)24/8/28	Co CL-856
29	Me and My Gin	(146897-3)25/8/28	Co CL-856
30	Nobody Knows You When You're Down and Out	(148534-3)15/5/29	Co CL-856
31	St. Louis Blues--Part 7	(NY-??-)c. 8/29	Jo SM-3098
32	Blue Spirit Blues	(149134-3)11/10/29	Co CL-858
33	Black Mountain Blues	(150658-2)22/7/30	Co CL-856
34	Long Old Road	(151595-3)11/6/31	Co CL-858
35	Shipwreck Blues	(151597-3)11/6/31	Co CL-858
36	Do Your Duty	(152577-2)24/11/33	Co CL-856
37	Give a Pigfoot	(152578-2)24/11/33	Co CL-856
38	Take Me For a Buggy Ride	(152579-2)24/11/33	Co CL-856
39	I'm Down in the Dumps	(153580-2)24/11/33	Co CL-856

SMIBM Bessie Mae Smith

1	St. Louis Daddy	(L-78-?)c. 12/29	OJL 20
2	Sugar Man Blues--Part 1	(C-6167-)19/9/30	HIS HLP-2
3	Sugar Man Blues--Part 2	(C-6168-)19/9/30	HIS HLP-2

SMIC Clara Smith

1	I Got Everything a Woman Needs	(81059-6)28/6/23	VJM VLP-15
2	Every Woman's Blues	(81060-5)28/6/23	VJM VLP-15
3	Down South Blues	(81151-3)27/7/23	VJM VLP-15
4	All Night Blues	(81153-3)27/7/23	VJM VLP-15
5	Play it a Long-Time Papa	(81154-2)27/7/23	VJM VLP-15
6	I Want My Sweet Daddy Now	(81183-1)31/8/23	VJM VLP-15
7	I Never Miss My Sunshine	(81202-2)7/9/23	VJM VLP-15
8	Don't Never Tell Nobody	(81198-4)1/10/23	VJM VLP-15
9	Kansas City Man Blues	(81222-6)2/10/23	VJM VLP-15
10	Uncle Sam Blues	(81253-2)2/10/23	VJM VLP-15
11	I'm Going Back to My Used To Be	(81262-2)4/10/23	VJM VLP-16
12	It' Won't Be Long Now	(81476-1)11/1/24	VJM VLP-16
13	Hot Papa	(81477-3)11/1/24	VJM VLP-16
14	I'm Gonna Tear Your Playhouse Down	(81495-1)18/1/24	VJM VLP-16
15	I Don't Love Nobody	(81496-1)18/1/24	VJM VLP-16
16	Good Looking Papa Blues	(81508-1)29/1/24	VJM VLP-16
17	You Don't Know My Mind	(81509-1)29/1/24	VJM VLP-16
18	My Doggone Lazy Man	(81512-2)31/1/24	VJM VLP-16
19	31st Street Blues	(81514-2)31/1/24	VJM VLP-16
20	War Horse Mama	(81683-2)10/4/24	VJM VLP-16
21	Cold Weather Papa	(81684-1)10/4/24	VJM VLP-16
22	Mean Papa, Turn in Your Key	(81697-2)17/4/24	VJM VLP-16
23	The Clearing House Blues	(81698-2)17/4/24	VJM VLP-17

SMIC (cont.)

24	Don't Advertise Your Man	(81722-1)	23/4/24	VJM VLP-17
25	Back Woods Blues	(81694-4)	30/4/24	VJM VLP-17
26	Deep Blue Sea Blues	(81931-3)	19/8/24	VJM VLP-17
27	Texas Moaner Blues	(81932-1)	19/8/24	VJM VLP-17
28	Basement Blues	(140052-1)	20/9/24	VJM VLP-17
29	Mama's Gone Goodbye	(140053-4)	20/9/24	VJM VLP-17
30	Freight Train Blues	(140064-3)	30/9/24	VJM VLP-17
31	Done Sold My Soul to the Devil	(140076-3)	30/9/24	VJM VLP-17
32	San Francisco Blues	(140091-2)	7/10/24	VJM VLP-17
33	Death Letter Blues	(140108-1)	15/10/24	VJM VLP-17
34	Prescription for the Blues	(140109-1)	15/10/24	VJM VLP-17
35	Steel Drivin' Man	(140181-2)	16/12/24	VJM VLP-17
36	He's Mine, All Mine	(140182-1)	16/12/24	VJM VLP-17
37	Broken Busted Blues	(140227-2)	7/1/25	CC 32
38	Shipwrecked Blues	(140491-1)	3/4/25	CC 32
39	Court House Blues	(140492-1)	3/4/25	CC 32
40	My John Blues	(140493-1)	3/4/25	CC 32

SMIE Ethel Smith

1	Jelly Roll Mill	(18804)	22/9/32	Riv RM-8819
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SMIIV Ivy Smith

1	Sad and Blue	(4089-1)	c.1/27	His HLP-2
2	Third Alley Blues	(4094-1)	c.1/27	His HLP-2

SMIJ J. T. "Funny Paper" Smith (The Howling Wolf)

1	Howling Wolf Blues--No. 1	(C-6404-A)	19/9/30	Yz L-1031
2	Howling Wolf Blues--No. 2	(C-6405-A)	19/9/30	Yz L-1031
3	Good Coffee Blues	(C-6409-)	20/9/30	Yz L-1031
4	Mama's Quittin' and Leavin'--Part 1	(C-7100-)	c.12/30	Yz L-1031
5	Mama's Quittin' and Leavin'--Part 2	(C-7101-)	c.12/30	Yz L-1031
6	Tell It to the Judge No. 1	(C-7238-A)	c.28/1/31	Yz L-1031
7	Tell It to the Judge No. 2	(C-7239-?)	c.28/1/31	Yz L-1031
8	Money Blues	(V0-126-)	c.3/31	Yz L-1031
9	Corn Whiskey Blues	(V0-127-)	c.3/31	Yz L-1031
10	County Jail Blues	(V0-132-A)	c.3/31	Yz L-1031
11	Hungry Wolf	(V0-165-A)	c.4/31	Yz L-1031
12	Hoppin' Toad Frog	(V0-166-A)	c.4/31	Yz L-1031
13	Fool's Blues	(V0-167-A)	c.4/31	Yz L-1010
14	Seven Sisters Blues--Part 1	(V0-168-A)	c.4/31	Yz L-1031
15	Seven Sisters Blues--Part 2	(V0-169-A)	c.4/31	Yz L-1031
16	Before Long	(V0-170-A)	c.4/31	Rt RL-312

SMIL Laura Smith

1	Gonna Put You Right in Jail	(7074-2)	c.2/27	VJM VLP-40
2	Don't You Leave Me Here	(7130-2)	c.3/27	VJM VLP-40

SMIM	Manie Smith		
1	Jenny's Ball	(404852-A)19/2/31	Sw S-1240
SMISI	Six Cylinder Smith		
1	Oh Oh Lonesome Blues	(L-213-1)c.3/30	Yz L-1004
2	Pennsylvania Woman Blues	(L-214-2)c.3/30	Yz L-1004
SMIT	Trixie Smith		
1	I Don't Know and I Don't Care Blues	(1766-1)c.5/24	CC 29
2	Freight Train Blues	(1767-1)c.5/24	CC 29
3	Sorrowful Blues	(1780-2)c.5/24	CC 29
4	Don't Shake It No More	(1807-2)c.6/24	CC 29
5	Praying Blues	(1886-2)9/24	CC 29
6	Ride Jockey Ride	(1977-?)12/24	CC 29
7	Choo Choo Blues	(1978-3)12/24	CC 29
8	You've Got to Beat Me to Keep Me	(2015-2)c.2/25	CC 29
9	Mining Camp Blues	(2016-1)c.2/25	CC 29
10	The World's Jazz Crazy and So Am I	(2063-2)3/25	CC 29
11	Railroad Blues	(2064-2)3/25	CC 29
12	He Likes It Slow	(2353-?)12/25	Jo SM-3098
13	Black Bottom Hop	(2364-1)12/25	CC 29
14	Love Me Like You Used To	(2365-?)12/25	CC 29
15	Freight Train Blues	(63866-A)26/5/38	Cor CP-58
16	No Good Man	(65815-A)14/6/39	AH 158
SPAN	Charlie Spand		
1	Good Gal	(15453)17/8/29	Ya L-1015
2	Back to the Woods Blues	(15456)17/8/29	Yz L-1015
SPAR	Milton Sparks		
1	Erie Train Blues	(91445)28/7/35	BC 6
SPAU	Henry Spaulding		
1	Gairo Blues	(C-3449-)c.6/5/29	Yz L-1003
2	Biddle Street Blues	(C-3450-)c.6/5/29	OJL 20
SPEC	Speckled Red (Rufus Perryman)		
1	House Dance Blues	(M-184-)22/9/29	OJL 20
SPIS	Sweet Pease Spivey (Addie Spivey)		
1	Double Dozens	(90787-C)12/8/36	AH 158
SPIV	Victoria Spivey		
1	Arkansas Road Blues	(80768-B)27/4/27	Sp LP-2001

SPIV (cont.)

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|----|-------------------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| 2 | The Alligator Pond Went Dry | (80269-B)27/4/27 | Sp1 LP-2001 |
| 3 | Murder In the First Degree | (81596-B)17/11/27 | Sp1 LP-2001 |
| 4 | My Handy Man | (401114-B)12/9/28 | Sw S-1240 |
| 5 | Organ Grinder Blues | (401115-A)12/9/28 | Sp1 LP-2001 |
| 6 | Organ Grinder Blues | (401115-C)12/9/28 | Sw S-1240 |
| 7 | New Black Snake Blues--Part.1 | (401222-A)13/10/28 | Sp1 LP-2001 |
| 8 | How Do You Do It That Way? | (402526-A)10/7/29 | Sp1 LP-2001 |
| 9 | Telephoning the Blues | (56735-1)1/10/29 | Sp1 LP-2001 |
| 10 | Don't Trust Nobody Blues | (V0-150-)20/3/31 | Sp1 LP-2001 |
| 11 | Black Snake Swing | (90785-A)7/7/36 | AH 158 |
| 12 | I'll Never Fall In Love Again | (90789-A)7/7/36 | Sp1 LP-2001 |
| 13 | T. B.'s Got Me Blues | (90790-A)7/7/36 | Sp1 LP-2001 |
| 14 | I Can't Last Long | (C-1450-2)20/8/36 | Sp1 LP-2001 |
| 15 | Detroit Moan | (C-1568-?)15/10/36 | Sp1 LP-2001 |

SPRU Freddie Spruell

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|----|---------------------------------|------------------|------------|
| 1 | Milk Cow Blues | (9793-A)25/6/26 | Yz L-1038 |
| 2 | Muddy Water Blues | (9908-A)17/11/26 | Mam S-3802 |
| 3 | Way Back Down Home | (9909-A)17/11/26 | Mam S-3802 |
| 4 | Tom Cat Blues | (20727-2)c. 2/28 | Hls HLP-17 |
| 5 | Low-Down Mississippi Bottom Man | (20728-1)c. 7/28 | Mam S-3802 |
| 6 | 4A Highway | (85782-)12/4/35 | Mam S-3802 |
| 7 | Don't Cry Baby | (85783-)12/4/35 | Mam S-3802 |
| 8 | Your Good Man Is Gone | (85784-)12/4/35 | Mam S-3802 |
| 9 | Let's Go Riding | (85785-)12/4/35 | OJL 18 |
| 10 | Mr. Freddie's Kokomo Blues | (85786-)12/4/35 | Mam S-3802 |

STEV Vol Stevens

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|---|---|-------------------|------------|
| 1 | Beale Street Mess Around | (40320-1)20/10/27 | Rt RL-322 |
| 2 | I'll See You in the Spring, When
the Birds Begin to Sing | (40321-1)20/10/27 | Rt RL-322 |
| 3 | Vol Stevens Blues | (40324-1)20/10/27 | OJL 21 |
| 4 | Baby Got the Rickets | (40325-1)20/10/27 | OJL 19 |
| 5 | Coal Oil Blues | (41888-2)13/2/28 | OJL 4 |
| 6 | Papa Long Blues | (41889-2)13/2/28 | Rt RL-322 |
| 7 | Aunt Caroline Dyer Blues | (62541-)29/5/30 | Jq SM-310A |
| 8 | Stonewall Blues | (62542-)29/5/30 | BC 2 |

STOK Frank Stokes

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|---|-------------------------|------------------|---------------|
| 1 | You Shall | (4771-3)c. 8/27 | Rt RL-308 |
| 2 | Sweet to Mama | (4773-1)c. 8/27 | Rt RL-308 |
| 3 | Half Cup of Tea | (4774-2)c. 8/27 | Rt RL-308 |
| 4 | Beale Town Bound | (4775-2)c. 8/27 | Rt RL-308 |
| 5 | Last Go Round | (4777-1)c. 8/27 | Bio BLP-12041 |
| 6 | You Shall | (20043-2)c. 9/27 | Bio BLP-12041 |
| 7 | It's a Good Thing | (20044-2)c. 9/27 | Bio BLP-12041 |
| 8 | Mr. Crump Don't Like It | (20045-2)c. 9/27 | OJL 21 |
| 9 | Blues in "D" | (20048-2)c. 9/27 | Bio BLP-12041 |

STOK (cont.)

10	Downtown Blues	(41822-1)1/2/28	BC 5
11	Downtown Blues	(41822-2)1/2/28	His. HLP-31
12	Bedtime Blues	(41825-1)1/2/28	Rt RL-308
13	What's the Matter Blues	(41826-1)1/2/28	Yz L-1002
14	Mistreatin' Blues	(45419-1)27/8/28	Rt RL-308
15	It Won't Be Long Now	(45420-2)27/8/28	Rt RL-307
16	Nehi Mama Blues	(45421-2)27/8/28	Rt RL-308
17	Stomp That Thing	(45426-2)28/8/28	Rt RL-308
18	Take Me Back	(45454-2)30/8/28	Yz L-1008
19	How Long?	(45455-1)30/8/28	BC 6
20	Ain't Going to Do Like I Used to Do	(21229-2)c.3/29	Rt RL-308
21	Hunting Blues	(21234-1)c.3/29	Rt RL-338
22	South Memphis Blues	(55573-2)23/9/29	Rt RL-308
23	Bunker Hill Blues	(55574-1)23/9/29	Rt RL-308
24	Right Now Blues	(55584-2)25/9/29	Yz L-1018
25	Shiney Town Blues	(55591-1)25/9/29	RBF RF-202
26	Frank Stoke's Dream	(56305-2)30/9/29	Yz L-1008
27	Memphis Rounders Blues	(56306-2)30/9/29	Rt RL-308

STON Joe Stone

1	It's Hard Time	(76837-A)2/8/33	Yz L-1030
2	Back Door Blues	(76838-A)2/8/33	Yz L-1030

STOV Stovepipe No. 1 (Sam Jones)

1	Court Street Blues	(80749-A)25/4/27	Fly LP-103
2	A Woman Gets Tired of the Same	(80758-A)26/4/27	Rt RL-310
3	Bed Slats	(80760-B)26/4/27	His HLP-4

SYKR Roosevelt Sykes

1	"44" Blues	(402451-A)14/6/29	His. HLP-5
2	All My Money Gone Blues	(402452-A)14/6/29	Yz L-1033
3	The Way I Feel Blues	(402453-B)14/6/29	Yz L-1033
4	Fire Detective Blues	(15557)7/9/29	Riv RM-8819
5	Single Tree Blues	(15563)7/9/29	Riv RM-8819
6	Skeet and Garret	(403312-A)16/11/29	Yz L-1033
7	Lost All I Had Blues	(403322-A)16/11/29	RBF RF-12
8	Poor Boy Blues	(403323-A)16/11/29	Yz L-1033
9	Kelly's 44 Blues	(62904-2)12/6/30	Yz L-1033
10	3 6 and 9	(L-449-2)c.8/30	Riv RM-8819
11	We Can Sell That Thing	(L-450-2)c.8/30	Riv RM-8819
12	No Good Woman Blues	(C-6475-A)3/11/30	Yz L-1033
13	As True As I've Been to You	(69403-1)9/6/31	Yz L-1033
14	Hard Luck Man Blues	(69404-1)9/6/31	Yz L-1033
15	Mr. Sykes Blues	(18801)22/9/32	Yz L-1033
16	Highway 61 Blues	(18802)22/9/32	Yz L-1033

SYLV Hannah Sylvester

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|---|-----------------------|------------------|------------|
| 1 | Midnight Blues | (1407-1)c.5/23 | VJM VLP-40 |
| 2 | Down South Blues | (70328)c.21/9/23 | VJM VLP-40 |
| 3 | I Want My Sweet Daddy | (70329)c.21/9/23 | VJM VLP-40 |

TAMJ Tampa Joe

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|---|---------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| 1 | Wringing That Thing | (402289-A)12/3/29 | Me1 MLP-7324 |
|---|---------------------|-------------------|--------------|

TAMP Tampa Red (Hudson Whittaker)

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|---|------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------|
| 1 | Through Train Blues | (20544-2)c.5/28 | Yz L-1039 |
| 2 | It's Tight Like That | ()c.9/28 | His HLP-1 |
| 3 | The Duck Yas-Yas-Yas | (C-3485-)c.16/5/29 | Yz L-1039 |
| 4 | What Is It That Tastes Like Gravy? | (C-3594-)c.14/6/29 | Yz L-1039 |
| 5 | Jim Jackson's Jamboree--Part I | (M-203/4)14/10/29 | Yz L 1021 |
| 6 | No Matter How She Done It | (11210-A)3/2/32 | Yz L-1039 |
| 7 | Kingfish Blues | (80385-1)22/3/34 | RCA LPV-518 |
| 8 | Mean Mistreater Blues | (80604-1)14/6/34 | RCA LPV-518 |
| 9 | Seminole Blues | (014333-)11/10/37 | Yz L-1039 |

TAYC Charley Taylor

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|---|----------------------|-----------------|-----------|
| 1 | Heavy Suitcase Blues | (L-251-2)3-4/30 | Yz L-1028 |
| 2 | Louisiana Bound | (L-252-2)3-4/30 | Her H-205 |

TEMP Johnnie Temple

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|---|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------|
| 1 | Big Boat Whistle | (C-986-B)14/5/35 | OJL 17 |
| 2 | The Evil Devil Blues | (C-987-)14/5/35 | Yz L-1038 |
| 3 | Louise Louise Blues | (90981-A)12/11/36 | Cor CP-58 |
| 4 | So Lonely and Blue | (91247-A)14/5/37 | RBF RF-16 |
| 5 | New Louise Louise Blues | (91248-A)14/3/37 | RBF RF-16 |

TEXT Texas Tommy

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|---|------------------|-----------------------|-----------|
| 1 | Jail Break Blues | (DAL-698-A)c.25/10/28 | Rt RL-312 |
|---|------------------|-----------------------|-----------|

THOE Elvie Thomas

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|---|------------------------|-----------------|-------|
| 1 | Motherless Child Blues | (L-264-2)c.4/30 | OJL 6 |
|---|------------------------|-----------------|-------|

THOG George Thomas

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|---|------------------------|-----------------|-----------|
| 1 | Fast Stuff Blues | (L-17-2)c.11/29 | Rt RL-340 |
| 2 | Don't Kill Him in Here | (L-18-2)c.11/29 | Rt RL-340 |

THOH Henry Thomas (Ragtime Texas)

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|---|-------------------|-----------|-----------|
| 1 | Cottonfield Blues | ()c.7/27 | OJL 3 |
| 2 | Arkansas | ()c.7/27 | Rt RL-312 |
| 3 | Bob McKinney | ()10/27 | OJL 3 |

THOH (cont.)

4	Shanty Blues	() 10/27	OJL 3
5	Honey, Won't You Allow Me One More Chance?	(C-1220) 7/10/27	OJL 3
6	Run, Mollie, Run	(C-1222) 7/10/27	OJL 3
7	Bull Doze Blues	(C-1999-) c. 13/6/28	OJL 3
8	Texas Worried Blues	(C-2002-) c. 13/6/28	OJL 3
9	Don't Ease Me In	() 13/6/28	OJL 3
10	Texas Easy Street Blues	() c. 13/6/28	OJL 3
11	Charmin' Betsy	(C-4621-) c. 7/10/29	Rt RL-315
12	Don't Leave Me Here	(C-4624) c. 7/10/29	Yz L-1004

THOH Hociel Thomas

1	Gambler's Dream	(9471-A) 11/11/25	Bio BLP-C6
2	Adam and Eve Had the Blues	(9473-A) 11/11/25	Bio BLP-C6
3	Put It Where I Can Get It	(9474-A) 11/11/25	Bio BLP-C6
4	I've Stopped My Man	(9476-A) 11/11/25	Bio BLP-C6
5	Listen to Ma	(9521-A) 24/2/26	Bio BLP-C6

THOJ Jesse ("Babyface") Thomas

1	Blue Goose Blues	(55326-2) 10/8/29	Yz L-1032
2	No Good Woman Blues	(55327-2) 10/8/29	Yz L-1032

THOR Ramblin' Thomas (Willard Thomas)

1	So Lonesome	(20334-2) c. 2/28	Yz L-1026
2	Hard to Rule Woman Blues	(20335-3) c. 2/28	Bio BLP-12004
3	Lock* and Key Blues	(20336-3) c. 2/28	Yz L-1032
4	Sawmill Moan	(20337-2) c. 2/28	Bio BLP-12004
5	No Baby Blues	(20338-1) c. 2/28	Bio BLP-12004
6	Ramblin' Mind Blues	(20339-2) c. 2/28	Bio BLP-12004
7	No Job Blues	(20343-2) c. 2/28	Bio BLP-12004
8	Back Gnawing Blues	(20344-2) c. 2/28	Bio BLP-12004
9	Jig Head Blues	(21017-4) c. 11/28	Bio BLP-12004
10	Hard Dallas Blues	(21018-2) c. 11/28	Bio BLP-12004
11	Ramblin' Man	(21019-4) c. 11/28	Bio BLP-12004
12	Poor Boy Blues	(21020-4) c. 11/28	Bio BLP-12004
13	Good Time Blues	(21027-1) c. 11/28	Bio BLP-12004
14	New Way of Living Blues	(21028-2) c. 11/28	Bio BLP-12004

THOZ Jim Thomkins

1	Bedside Blues	(MEM-780-) c. 2/30	Rt RL-319
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THPA Ashley Thompson

1	Mingewood Blues	(41803-2) 30/1/28	Fwy FA-2953
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THPE Edward Thompson

1	Showers of Rain Blues	(GEX-2411-A) c. 23/10/29	Yz L-1006
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THPE (cont.)

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|---|---------------------|------------------------|-----------|
| 2 | Florida Bound | (GEX-2412)c.23/10/29 | Yz L-1006 |
| 3 | Seven Sister Blues | (GEX-2413)c.23/10/29 | Yz L-1006 |
| 4 | West Virginia Blues | (GEX-2416-A)c.23/10/29 | Yz L-1006 |

TORE George Torey

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|---|---------------------|----------------|-----------|
| 1 | Married Woman Blues | (B-64-2)2/4/37 | Yz L-1002 |
| 2 | Lonesome Man Blues | (B-65-1)2/4/37 | Yz L-1002 |

TOWH Henry Townsend

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|---|------------------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| 1 | Henry's Worried Blues | (403300-A)15/11/29 | Yz L-1030 |
| 2 | Mistreated Blues | (403301-A)15/11/29 | Yz L-1030 |
| 3 | Long Ago Blues | (403302-)15/11/29 | Yz L-1003 |
| 4 | Poor Man Blues | (403303-A)15/11/29 | Yz L-1030 |
| 5 | Sick With the Blues | (-)1933 | Yz L-1030 |
| 6 | She's Got a Mean Disposition | (85494-1)25/2/35 | Yz L-1030 |

TOWS Sam Townsend

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|---|--------------------|-------------------|-----------|
| 1 | Lily Kimball Blues | (150259-2)17/4/30 | Yz L-1021 |
|---|--------------------|-------------------|-----------|

TUCB Bessie Tucker

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|---|---------------|------------------|-------------|
| 1 | Bessie's Moan | (45436-2)29/8/28 | His HLP-4 |
| 2 | Penitentiary | (45441-2)29/8/28 | Fwy FJ-2801 |

TURNB Buck Turner (Black Ace)

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|---|----------------------|------------------|-----------|
| 1 | Black Ace | (61790-A)15/2/37 | Yz L-1026 |
| 2 | Christmas Time Blues | (61793-A)15/2/37 | Rt RL-327 |

TURNJ Joe Turner

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|---|-------------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| 1 | Blues on Central Avenue | (DLA-2739-A)8/9/41 | Br 87.504 |
|---|-------------------------|--------------------|-----------|

UNKA unknown artists

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|---|-------------------------|------------------|---------------|
| 1 | String Band Blues | (-)c.7/26 | Rt RL-311 |
| 2 | Snitchin' Gambler Blues | (41817-2)1/2/28 | Rt RL-322 |
| 3 | Touch Me Light Mama | (20590-2)c.5/28 | OJL 2 |
| 4 | Sugar Pudding | (47009-1)11/9/28 | Rt RL-337 |
| 5 | Throw Me Down | (20998-1)c.10/28 | Bio BLP-12029 |
| 6 | Selling the Jelly | (64738-)28/11/30 | OJL 19 |

VINC Walter Vincson

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|---|-----------------------------|-------------------|------------|
| 1 | Overtime Blues | (M-178)c.22/9/29 | Yz L-1007 |
| 2 | Sitting On Top of the World | (403805-B)17/2/30 | Mam S-3804 |
| 3 | Stop and Listen Blues | (403806-A)17/2/30 | Yz L-1007 |
| 4 | Loneley One In This Town | (403807-B)17/2/30 | Rt RL-316 |

VINC (cont.)

5	Yodeling Fiddling Blues	(404146-B)12/6/30	Mam S-3804
6	Your Good Man Caught the Train and Gone	(404710-A)15/12/30	Mam S-3804
7	Unhappy Blues	(404712-B)15/12/30	Mam S-3804
8	Honey Babe Let the Deal Go Down	(404782-B)19/12/30	Mam S-3804
9	She Ain't No Good	(404783-B)19/12/30	Mam S-3804
10	Ramrod Blues	(404784-A)19/12/30	Mam S-3804
11	Stop and Listen Blues No. 2	(404785-?)19/12/30	Mam S-3804
12	Please Baby	(405007-1)24/10/31	Mam S-3804
13	The World Is Going Wrong	(405009-1)24/10/31	Mam S-3804
14	Shake Hands and Tell Me Goodbye	(405020-1)25/10/31	Mam S-3804
15	I've Got Blood in My Eyes for You	(405023-1)25/10/31	Mam S-3804
16	The New Stop and Listen Blues	(L-1551-3)c.7/32	Yz L-1014
17	Go Away Woman	(L-1554-1)c.7/32	Bio BLP-12041
18	New Shake That Thing	(L-1555-2)c.7/32	Bio BLP-12041
19	Don't Wake It Up	(L-1560-1)c.7/32	Bio BLP-12041
20	I'll Be Gone, Long Gone	(L-1565-1)c.7/32	Bio BLP-12041
VIRG Otto Virgial			
1	Little Girl in Rome	(96240-1)31/10/35	Mam S-3802
2	Bad Notion Blues	(96241-1)31/10/35	Mam S-3802
WALKA Aaron "T-Bone" Walker			
1	Trinity River Blues	(149548-1)5/12/29	Rt RL-327
WALKB Uncle Bud Walker			
1	Look Here Mama Blues	(402008-A)30/7/28	Yz L-1018
2	Stand Up Suitcase Blues	(402009-B)30/7/28	Yz L-1009
WALKW Willie Walker			
1	South Carolina Rag	(151065-)6/12/30	OJL 18
WALLM Minnie Wallace			
1	Dirty Butter	(55571-2)23/9/29	Rt RL-322
2	The Old Folks Started It	(55572-2)23/9/29	OJL 21
3	The Cockeyed World	(JAX-113-2)12/10/35	Rt RL-321
4	Field Mouse Stomp	(JAX-114-1)12/10/35	Rt RL-321
WALLS Sippie Wallace			
1	Special Delivery Blues	(9547-A)1/3/26	CC 32
2	Jack O'Diamonds Blues	(9548-A)1/3/26	CC 32
3	Bedroom Blues	(9930-A)20/11/26	Sw S-1240
4	Dead Drunk Blues	(80837-A)6/5/27	Bio BLP-C6
5	Have You Ever Been Down?	(80838-A)6/5/27	Bio BLP-C6
6	Lazy Man Blues	(80839-B)6/5/27	CC 32
7	The Flood Blues	(80840-B)6/5/27	Sw S-1240

WASBS Washboard Sam (Robert Brown)

1	Mama Don't Allow No. 1	(C-1022-B)20/6/35	BC 10
2	Jesse James Blues	(C-1023-B)20/6/35	BC 10
3	Mama Don't Allow No. 2	(C-1059-?)3/7/35	RBF RF-202
4	Out With the Wrong Woman	(01883-)12/12/36	BC 10
5	Come On In	(01884-)21/12/36	RBF RF-16
6	Big Woman	(01885-)21/12/36	BC 10
7	Back Door	(07616-)4/5/37	BC 10
8	We Gonna Move	(07617-)4/5/37	BC 10
9	Low Down Woman	(07618-)4/5/37	BC 10
10	Lowland Blues	(07620-)4/5/37	BC 10
11	I'm On My Way Blues	(07621-)4/5/37	BC 10
12	Bucket's Got a Hole in It	(020808-)16/6/38	BC 2
13	Save It For Me	(020809-)16/6/38	BC 10
14	Sophisticated Mama	(020814-)16/6/38	BC 2
15	Diggin' My Potatoes	(034797-)15/5/39	BC 10
16	I'm Goin' to St. Louis	(049370-)5/8/40	BC 10
17	Yes I Got Your Woman	(049374-)5/8/40	RBF RF-16
18	Life Is Just a Book	(064477-1)26/6/41	RCA LPV-577
19	I'm Not the Lad	(064478-1)26/6/41	RCA LPV-577
20	My Feet Jumped Salty	(064479-1)26/6/41	RCA LPV-577
21	Flying Crow Blues	(064480-1)26/6/41	BC 10
22	Levee Camp Blues	(064481-1)26/6/41	BC 10
23	I'm Feeling Low Down	(064482-1)26/6/41	RCA LPV-577
24	Brown and Yellow Woman Blues	(064483-1)26/6/41	RCA LPV-577
25	She Belongs to the Devil	(064484-1)26/6/41	RCA LPV-577
26	Let Me Play Your Vendor	(070375-1)4/11/41	RCA LPV-577
27	Gonna Hit the Highway	(070377-1)4/11/41	RCA LPV-577
28	I've Been Treated Wrong	(070378-1)4/11/41	RBF RF-1
29	Evil Blues	(070379-1)4/11/41	RCA LPV-577
30	Get Down Brother	(070380-1)4/11/41	RCA LPV-577
31	Lover's Lane Blues	(070381-1)4/11/41	BC 10
32	You Stole My Love	(070382-1)4/11/41	RCA LPV-577
33	I Laid My Cards on the Table	(074686-1)31/7/42	RCA LPV-577
34	I Get the Blues at Bedtime	(074687-1)31/7/42	RCA LPV-577

WASBW Washboard Walter

1	Narrow Face Blues	(L-142-4)c.2/30	Her H-205
2	Insurance Man Blues	(L-283-2)c.4/30	Her H-205

WASHE Elizabeth Washington

1	Garden of Joy-Blues	(38637-2)6/6/27	OJL 4
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WASHL Louis Washington (Tallahassee Tight)

1	Tallahassee Women	(14637-1)18/1/34	Fly LP-103
2	Black Snake Blues	(14676-1)24/1/34	Rt RL-313

WATE Ethel Waters

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|----|-----------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| 1 | Down Home Blues | (P-115-1)c.5/21 | Bio BLP-12022 |
| 2 | One Man Man | (P-146-1)c.8/21 | Bio BLP-12022 |
| 3 | There'll Be Some Changes Made | (P-147-1)c.8/21 | Bio BLP-12022 |
| 4 | Georgia Blues | (B)c.5/22 | Bio BLP-12022 |
| 5 | That Da Da Strain | (A)c.5/22 | Bio BLP-12022 |
| 6 | At the New Jump Steady Ball | ()c.5/22 | Bio BLP-12022 |
| 7 | Oh, Joe, Play That Trombone | ()c.5/22 | Bio BLP-12022 |
| 8 | Memphis Man | (564-1)c.3/23 | Bio BLP-12022 |
| 9 | Midnight Blues | (565-2)c.3/23 | Bio BLP-12022 |
| 10 | You Can't Do What My Last Man Did | (A)c.6/23 | Bio BLP-12022 |
| 11 | Ethel Sings 'Em | (B)c.6/23 | Bio BLP-12022 |
| 12 | Craving Blues | (1742-2)c.4/24 | Bio BLP-12022 |

WEAC Curley Weaver

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|---|-----------------|--------------------|------------|
| 1 | Sweet Patunia | (147304-2)26/10/28 | His HLP-32 |
| 2 | No No Blues | (147305-2)26/10/28 | His HLP-32 |
| 3 | Sometime Mama | (C-9939-B)23/4/35 | His HLP-31 |
| 4 | Oh Lawdy Mama | (C-9940-A)23/4/35 | Rt RL-326 |
| 5 | Two Faced Woman | (C-9941-A)23/4/35 | His HLP-31 |
| 6 | Fried Pie Blues | (C-9943-A)23/4/35 | Rt RL-326 |

WEAS Sylvester Weaver

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|---|------------------------|------------------|-----------|
| 1 | Can't Be Trusted Blues | (81401-8)31/8/27 | Yz L-1012 |
|---|------------------------|------------------|-----------|

WELD Will Weldon (Casey Bill)

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|----|---|--------------------|-----------|
| 1 | Stingy Woman--Blues | (37942-1)24/2/27 | Rt RL-322 |
| 2 | Memphis Jug--Blues | (37943-2)24/2/27 | Rt RL-322 |
| 3 | Sunshine Blues | (38658-1)9/6/27 | Rt RL-322 |
| 4 | Turpentine Blues | (40322-2)20/10/27 | Yz L-1008 |
| 5 | Hitch Me to Your Buggy, and Drive
Me Like a Mule | (40323-2)20/10/27 | OJL 21 |
| 6 | Peaches in the Springtime | (41890-2)13/2/28 | Rt RL-311 |
| 7 | W. P. A. Blues | (C-1256-1)12/2/36 | BC 7 |
| 8 | Blues Everywhere I Go | (100323)2/4/36 | Rt RL-329 |
| 9 | Somebody's Got to Go | (100324)2/4/36 | Rt RL-329 |
| 10 | Red Hot Blues | (C-2031-1)21/10/37 | CC 3 |
| 11 | Worried About That Woman | (C-2032-1)21/10/37 | CC 3 |

WELS Nolan Welsh (Barrel House Welsh)

- | | | | |
|---|------------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| 1 | The Bridwell Blues | (9727-A)16/6/26 | Fwy FJ-2802 |
| 2 | St. Peter Blues | (9728-A)16/6/26 | CC 32 |
| 3 | Dying Pickpocket Blues | (21098-3)c.1/29 | Yz L-1028 |

WHEA Peetie Wheatstraw (William Bunch)

- | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| 1 | Mama's Advice | (C-6487-A)4/11/30 | BC 4 |
| 2 | Ain't It a Pity and a Shame | (C-6488-A)4/11/30 | Say SDR-191 |

WHEA (cont.)

3	Don't Hang My Clothes on No Barbed Wire Line	(C-6489-A)4/11/30	Say SDR-191
4	C and A Blues	(C-6891-A)6/1/31	OJL 20
5	Ice and Snow Blues	(67567-1)28/9/31	BC 4
6	Sleepless Nights Blues	(11519-A)17/3/32	Yz L-1030
7	All Night Long Blues	(C-9315-A)18/8/34	AH 158
8	Throw Me in the Alley	(C-9351-)24/8/34	Say SDR-191
9	Do'n' the Best I Can	(C-9443-?)11/9/34	Say SDR-191
10	The Rising Sun Blues	(C-921-A)25/3/35	Say SDR-191
11	Letter Writing Blues	(C-944-A)26/3/35	Say SDR-191
12	Cocktail Man Blues	(90173-A)17/7/35	Say SDR-191
13	King Spider Blues	(90174-A)17/7/35	Say SDR-191
14	Last Dime Blues	(C-1081-B)20/7/35	Say SDR-191
15	King of Spades	(C-1082-B)20/7/35	Say SDR-191
16	First and Last Blues	(C-1257-2)13/2/36	Say SDR-191
17	True Blue Woman	(C-1258-1)13/2/36	Say SDR-191
18	Sweet Home Blues	(C-1261-2)13/2/36	Say SDR-191
19	Good Woman Blues	(C-1262-T)13/2/36	RBF RF-12
20	Working Man	(60506-A)18/2/36	BC 4
21	Low Down Rascal	(60507-A)18/2/36	Say SDR-192
22	When I Get My Bonus	(60511-A)18/2/36	Say SDR-192
23	Coon Can Shorty	(60512-A)18/2/36	Say SDR-192
24	The First Shall Be the Last and the Last Shall Be First	(60523-A)19/2/36	Say SDR-192
25	Deep Sea Love	(60539-A)20/2/36	Say SDR-192
26	Remember and Forget Blues	(C-1351-2)8/4/36	Say SDR-192
27	Don't Take a Chance	(C-1352-1)8/4/36	Say SDR-192
28	Block and Tackle	(C-1354-2)9/4/36	Say SDR-192
29	Cut Out Blues	(C-1355-1)9/4/36	Say SDR-191
30	When a Man Gets Down	(90961-A)26/10/36	Say SDR-192
31	False Hearted Woman	(90963-A)26/10/36	Say SDR-192
32	Crazy with the Blues	(91150-A)26/3/37	Cor CP-58
33	Peetie Wheatstraw Stomp	(91152-A)26/3/37	BC 4
34	Peetie Wheatstraw Stomp No. 2	(91153-)26/3/27	BC 4
35	Crapshooter's Blues	(91154-A)26/3/37	Say SDR-192
36	Working on the Project	(91164-A)30/3/27	BC 4
37	Sick Bed Blues	(91317-A)2/11/37	Say SDR-192
38	I'm Gonna Cut Out Everything	(91320-A)2/11/37	Say SDR-192
39	Devilment Blues	(91323-A)2/11/37	Say SDR-192
40	Shack Bully Stomp	(63539-A)1/4/38	BC 4
41	Road Tramp Blues	(63540-B)1/4/38	BC 4
42	Truckin' Thru' Traffic	(91525-A)18/10/38	Say SDR-192
43	Sugar Mama	(91529-A)18/10/38	Say SDR-192
WHBR	Whistlin' Rufus (Rufus Briday)		
1	Sweet Jelly Rollin'	(77305-)11/12/33	Rt RL-334
WHIG	Georgia White		
1	Pigmeat Blues	(90722-A)12/5/36	AH 158

WHIG (cont.)

2	Walking the Street	(91104-A)28/1/37	AH 158
3	The Blues Ain't Nothin' But...???	(91545-A)21/10/38	Cor CP-58

WHIJ Joshua White

1	Welfare Blues	(14902-2)6/3/34	Hts HLP-22
2	Stormy Weather No. 1	(14903-1)6/3/34	Hts HLP-22

WHIM Washington White (Booker Washington White)

1	The Panama Limited	(59996-) 26/5/30	OJL 5
2	Pinebluff Arkansas	(C-1996-2)2/9/37	Co C-30036
3	Shake 'Em On Down	(C-1997-1)2/9/37	Co C-30036
4	Black Train Blues	(WC-2977-A)7/3/40	Co C-30036
5	Strange Place Blues	(WC-2978-A)7/3/40	Co C-30036
6	When Can I Change My Clothes	(WC-2979-A)7/3/40	Co C-30036
7	Sleepy Man Blues	(WC-2980-A)7/3/40	Co C-30036
8	Parchman Farm Blues	(WC-2981-A)7/3/40	Co C-30036
9	Good Gin Blues	(WC-2982-A)7/3/40	Co C-30036
10	High Fever Blues	(WC-2987-A)8/3/40	Co C-30036
11	District Attorney Blues	(WC-2988-A)8/3/40	Co C-30036
12	Fixin' to Die Blues	(WC-2989-A)8/3/40	Co C-30036
13	Aberdeen Mississippi Blues	(WC-2990-A)8/3/40	Co C-30036
14	Bukka's Jitterbug Swing	(WC-2991-A)8/3/40	Co C-30036
15	Special Stream Line	(WC-2992-A)8/3/40	Co C-30036

WIGG James "Boodle It" Wiggins

1	Evil Woman Blues	(20379-2)c.2/28	Nil MLP-2018
2	Forty-Four Blues	(15768-A)12/10/29	OJL 15
3	Frisco Bound Blues	(15769-A)12/10/29	OJL 15
4	Corrine Corrina Blues	(L-102-2)c.1/30	Her H-205
5	Gotta Shave 'Em Dry	(L-104-1)c.1/30	Her H-205

WILB "Bill" Wilber (Joe Wilbur McCoy)

1	My Babe My Babe	(90198-A)22/7/35	OJL 8
2	Greyhound Blues	(90199-A)22/7/35	Rt RL-334

WILEG Geeshie Wiley

1	Over to My House	(L-265-1)c.4/30	Yz L-1018
2	Eagles On a Half	(L-826-1)c.3/31	Yz L-1001

WILK Robert Wilkins

1	Jail House Blues	(45499-) 8/9/28	Yz L-1002
2	I Do Blues	(47000-) 8/9/28	OJL 5
3	That's No Way to Get Along	(M-189-) c.23/9/29	OJL 5
4	Alabama Blues	(M-190-) c.23/9/29	Rt RL-333
5	Long Train Blues	(M-191-) c.23/9/29	Rt RL-333

WILK (cont.)

6	Falling Down Blues	(M-192-)c.23/9/29	Yz L-1002
7	Nashville Stonewall Blues	(MEM-740-A)c.2/30	Rt RL-307
8	Police Sergeant Blues	(MEM-741-B)c.2/30	Rt RL-307
9	Get Away Blues	(MEM-742-B)c.2/30	OJL 11
10	I'll Go With Her Blues	(MEM-743-)c.2/30	OJL 11
11	Dirty Deal Blues	(JAX-104-)10/10/35	BC 5
12	New Stock Yard Blues	(JAX-107-)10/10/35	OJL 21
13	Old Jim Canan's	(JAX-117-)12/10/35	Yz L-1018

WILLR Henry Williams

1	Georgia Crawl	(146148-2)19/4/28	Rt RL-316
2	Lonesome Blues	(146149-2)19/4/28	Fly LP-103

WILLI "Jabo" Williams

1	Pollock Blues	(L-1406-?)c.5/32	Yz L-1028
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WILLJ Joe Williams

1	German Blues	(404677-B)11/12/30	OJL 4
2	The Wild Cat Squawl	(404680-A)11/12/30	BC 2
3	Gettin' Ready for Trial	(404682-C)11/12/30	OJL 4
4	Giving It Away	(404683-A)11/12/30	OJL 19
5	Little Leg Woman	(85487-1)25/2/35	Yz L-1038
6	Somebody's Been Borrowing That Stuff	(85488-1)25/2/35	RCA LPV-518
7	49 Highway Blues	(85490-)25/2/35	OJL 17
8	My Grey Pony	(85491-)25/2/35	RBF RF-14
9	Stepfather Blues	(85492-1)25/2/35	OJL 17
10	Baby Please Don't Go	(96244-1)31/10/35	RCA INT-1087
11	Wild Cow Blues	(96246-1)31/10/35	RCA INT-1087
12	I Know You Gonna Miss Me	(07661-1)5/5/37	RCA INT-1087
13	Rootin' Ground Hog	(07662-1)5/5/37	RCA INT-1087
14	Brother James	(07663-1)5/5/37	RCA INT-1087
15	I Won't Be in Hard Luck No More	(07664-1)5/5/37	RCA INT-1087
16	Crawlin' King Snake	(053989-2)27/3/41	RCA INT-1087
17	I'm Getting Wild About Her	(053990-1)27/3/41	BC 6
18	Peach Orchard Mama	(053991-1)27/3/41	RCA INT-1087
19	Meet Me Around the Corner	(053992-1R)27/3/41	RCA INT-1087
20	Please Don't Go	(070484-1)12/12/41	RCA INT-1087
21	Highway 49	(070485-1)12/12/41	RBF RF-11
22	Someday Baby	(070486-1)12/12/41	RBF RF-11
23	Break 'Em On Down	(070487-1)12/12/41	BC 21

WILLK Joe Williams

1	I Want It Awful Bad	(M-195-)c.24/9/29	Rt RL-321
2	Mr. Devil Blues	(M-195-)c.24/9/29	Rt RL-321
3	Get Your Head Trimmed Down	(020854-1)17/6/38	RCA INT-1175
4	Peach Orchard Mama	(020855-1)17/6/38	RCA INT-1175

MILLS Sonny Boy Williamson

1	Skinny Woman	(07654-1)	5/5/37	BC 20
2	Collector Man Blues	(016521-1)	11/11/37	BC 3
3	Early in the Morning	(016524-1)	11/11/37	RCA INT-1175
4	Project Highway	(016525-1)	11/11/37	RCA INT-1175
5	Moonshine	(020113-1)	13/3/38	RCA LPV-518
6	Miss Louisa Blues	(020114-1)	13/3/38	RBF RF-14
7	Down South	(020117-1)	13/3/38	RCA LPV-518
8	Until My Love Come Down	(020119-1)	13/3/38	RBF RF-14
9	Honey Bee Blues	(020842-1)	17/6/38	RCA INT-1088
10	Whiskey Headed Blues	(020844-1)	17/6/38	RCA INT-1088
11	Lord, Oh Lord Blues	(020845-1)	17/6/38	RCA INT-1088
12	You Give an Account	(020846-1)	17/6/38	BC 3
13	Shannon Street Blues	(020847-1)	17/6/38	RCA INT-1088
14	You've Been Foolin' Round Town	(020848-1)	17/6/38	RCA INT-1088
15	Deep Down in the Ground	(020849-1)	17/6/38	RCA INT-1088
16	Number Five Blues	(030848-1R)	17/12/38	RCA INT-1088
17	Christmas Morning Blues	(030849-1)	17/12/38	RCA INT-1088
18	Susie-Q	(030850-1)	17/12/38	RCA INT-1088
19	Blue Bird Blues--Part 1	(030851-1)	17/12/38	RCA INT-1088
20	Little Girl Blues	(030852-1)	17/12/38	RCA INT-1088
21	Low Down Ways	(030853-1)	17/12/38	RCA INT-1088
22	Goodbye Red	(030854-1)	17/12/38	RCA INT-1088
23	The Right Kind of Life	(030855-1)	17/12/38	RCA INT-1088
24	Insurance Man Blues	(030856-1)	17/12/38	RCA INT-1088
25	Rainy Day Blues	(030857-1)	17/12/38	RCA INT-1088
26	Bad Luck Blues	(040525-1)	21/7/39	BC 3
27	T. B. Blues	(040532-1)	21/7/39	BC 20
28	Joe Louis and John Henry	(040535-1)	21/7/39	BC 3
29	Train Fare Blues	(049198-1)	17/5/40	BC 20
30	Welfare Store Blues	(053001-1)	17/5/40	BC 3
31	My Little Machine	(053002-1)	17/5/40	BC 3
32	Western Union Man	(064019-1)	4/4/41	BC 3
33	Big Apple Blues	(064020-1)	4/4/41	BC 20
34	My Baby Made a Change	(064022-1)	4/4/41	BC 20
35	Shotgun Blues	(064023-1)	4/4/41	BC 3
36	Shady Grove Blues	(064492-1)	2/7/41	BC 20
37	Sloppy Drunk Blues	(064493-1)	2/7/41	BC 3
38	She Was a Dreamer	(064494-1)	2/7/41	BC 20
39	You Got to Step Back	(064495-1)	2/7/41	BC 20
40	Ground Hog Blues	(070143-1)	11/12/41	BC 3
41	Black Panther Blues	(070144-1)	11/12/41	BC 3
42	Broken Hearted Blues	(070145-1)	11/12/41	BC 20
43	She Don't Love Me That Way	(070146-1)	11/12/41	BC-3
44	My Black Name Blues	(070147-1)	11/12/41	BC 3

WILLX Ruth (Mary) Willis

1	Experience Blues	(151906-1)	23/10/31	Yz L-1037
2	Painful Blues	(151907-1)	23/10/31	Yz L-1037
3	Man of My Own	(12920-1)	17/1/33	Yz L-1026

WILSL Leola B. Wilson

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|---|------------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| 1 | Scoop It | (2607-4) c. 8/26 | His- HLP-1 |
| 2 | Stevodore Man | (2616-1) c. 8/26 | His HLP-1 |
| 3 | Down the Country | (4012-2) c. 11/26 | Bio BLP-12037 |
| 4 | Black Biting Bee Blues | (4013-2) c. 11/26 | Bio BLP-12037 |

WILSW "Kid" Wesley Wilson

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|---|----------------------|-------------------|-----------|
| 1 | Scoop It | (2607-4) c. 8/26 | His HLP-1 |
| 2 | The Gin Done Done It | (148977-?) 5/9/29 | His HLP-5 |
| 3 | Do It Right | (148978-3) 5/9/29 | His HLP-5 |

WOOH Hosea Woods

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|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| 1 | Fourth and Beale | (C-4338-) c. 12/9/29 | His HLP-15 |
| 2 | Last Chance Blues | (56316-) 1/10/29 | Her H-205 |
| 3 | The Rooster's Crowing Blues | (56340-) 3/10/29 | Her H-205 |
| 4 | Wolf River Blues | (64709-) 24/11/30 | OJL 19" |
| 5 | Prison Wall Blues | (64747) 28/11/30 | Rt RL-329 |

WOOO Oscar Woods

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|---|-----------------------------------|----------------------|-----------|
| 1 | Evil Hearted Woman | (60847-) 21/3/36 | Yz L-1026 |
| 2 | Lone Wolf Blues | (60848-A) 21/3/36 | Cor CP-58 |
| 3 | Don't Sell It--Don't Give It Away | (60849-) 21/3/36 | Yz L-1032 |
| 4 | Don't Sell It | (SA-2845-1) 30/10/37 | Yz L-1015 |

YATE "Blind Richard" Yates

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|---|------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|
| 1 | I'm Gonna Moan My Blues Away | (GEX-577-A) c. 9/4/27 | His HLP-1 |
| 2 | Sore Bunion Blues | (GEX-578-A) c. 9/4/27 | His HLP-1 |

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DISCOGRAPHY

This discography is a list of all the records which were used in this study. The list includes all of the records from which the blues texts were transcribed (see "The Blues Corpus Under Analysis" pp. 422-83), as well as those records which were cited for their record notes (see "Bibliography of References Cited," pp. 484-508). In many cases, the same record was used for both purposes in this study.

All of the records listed below are twelve inch, 33 1/3 rpm phonodiscs. Unless otherwise noted, each citation refers to one, double-sided phonodisc. Records are listed alphabetically, according to their record companies, and numerically, according to their identification numbers. The information given in each citation includes the following, reading from left to right:

- 1) the record identification number
- 2) the title of the record album
- 3) the record series, if applicable
- 4) the location of the record company, if this information is given on the album
- 5) the date when the record was produced, if this information is given on the album.

It is not always easy to judge the correct title for record albums. The title may vary considerably from the front cover, to the back cover, to the "spine" of the album, to the inserted record notes, to the record label itself. In all cases, I have taken the title from the record label, unless a title elsewhere on the album seemed more complete or more informative. At no time did I combine parts of different title variations.

ACE OF HEARTS

- AH-77 The Harlem Hamfats. London, 1964.
 AH-158 Out Came the Blues: Vol. 2. London, 1967.

ARHOO LIE

- F-1003 Black Ace. Berkeley, Ca., 1960.
 F-1019 Bukka White: Sky Songs, Vol. 1. Berkeley, Ca., 1965.

BIOGRAPH

- BLP-12000 Blind Lemon Jefferson 1926-1929. New York, n.d.
 BLP-12001 Blues the World Forgot: Ma Rainey and Her Georgia Jazz Band 1924-28. New York, n.d.
 BLP-12003 Bootleg Rum Dm Blues: Blind Blake 1926-1930. New York, n.d.
 BLP-12004 Ramblin' Mind Blues: Ramblin' Thomas 1928. New York, n.d.
 BLP-12013 Early Leadbelly 1935-1940: Narrated by Woody Guthrie. New York, 1969.
 BLP-12015 Master of the Blues: Blind Lemon Jefferson, Vol. 2: 1926-1929. New York, 1969.
 BLP-12022 Ethel Waters, "Oh Daddy." New York, n.d.
 BLP-12023 Search Warrant Blues: Blind Blake 1926-1932. New York, n.d.
 BLP-12029 Skip James: King of the Delta Blues Singers 1928-1964. Canaan, N.Y., n.d.
 BLP-12031 No Dough Blues, Vol. 3: Blind Blake 1926-1929. Canaan, N.Y., n.d.
 BLP-12037 Rope Stretchin' Blues: Blind Blake, Vol. 4, 1926-31. Canaan, N.Y., 1972.
 BLP-12041 Mississippi & Beale Street Sheiks 1927-1932. Canaan, N.Y., 1972.
 BLP-12042 Papa Charlie Jackson 1925-1928. Canaan, N.Y., 1972.
 BLP-C4 Mississippi John Hurt 1928: His First Recordings. Canaan, N.Y., 1972.
 BLP-C6 Mr. Armstrong Plays the Blues: Featuring Louis Armstrong 1925-1927. Canaan, N.Y., 1973.

BIOGRAPH (cont.)

BLP-C9 Leroy Carr: Singin' the Blues 1934. Canaan, N.Y., 1972.

BLUE GOOSE

2006 Sam Chatmon: The Mississippi Sheik. New York, n.d.

BLUE HORIZON

BM-4606 Mississippi Joe Callicott. Blues Masters, Vol. 6. New York, 1969.

BLUES CLASSICS

BC-1 Blues Classics by Memphis Minnie. N. pl., n.d.BC-2 Blues Classics by the Jug, Jook and Washboard Bands. Berkeley, Ca., n.d.BC-3 Blues Classics by Sonny Boy Williamson. N.pl., n.d.BC-4 Petie Wheatstraw and Kokomo Arnold. N.pl., n.d.BC-5 Country Blues Classics, Volume 1. N.pl., n.d.BC-6 Country Blues Classics, Volume 2. N.pl., n.d.BC-7 Country Blues Classics, Volume 3. Berkeley, Ca., n.d.BC-10 Blues Classics by Washboard Sam. N.pl., n.d.BC-11 Blind Boy Fuller with Sonny Terry and Bull City Red. N.pl., n.d.BC-13 Memphis Minnie, Vol. 2: With Kansas Joe, 1930-31. Berkeley, Ca., n.d.BC-14 Country Blues Classics, Volume 4. Berkeley, Ca., n.d.BC-20 Blues Classics by Sonny Boy Williamson, Volume 2. Berkeley, Ca., n.d.BC-21 Big Joe Williams and Sonny Boy Williamson. Berkeley, Ca., n.d.

BLUESVILLE, PRESTIGE/BLUESVILLE

1040 Blind Willie McTell: Last Session. Bergenfield, N.J., n.d.1047 Scraper Blackwell: Mr. Scraper's Blues. Bergenfield, N.J., 1961.

BLUESVILLE (cont.)

- 1048 Hard Working Man Blues: Memphis Willie B. Bergenfield, N.J., 1961.

BRUNSWICK

- BP-87.504 Bad Luck Blues: une anthologie du blues. Paris, n.d.

BYG

- 529.073 Ida Cox. Archive of Jazz, Vol. 23. France, n.d.
529.078 Gertrude "Ma" Rainey. Archive of Jazz, Vol. 28. France, n.d.

COLLECTOR'S CLASSICS

- CC-3 The Male Blues Singers, Vol. 1. N.pl., n.d.
CC-25 Kokomo Arnold. Masters of the Blues, Vol. 4. N.pl., n.d.
CC-29 Trixie Smith. Masters of the Blues, Vol. 5. N.pl., n.d.
CC-30 Lonnie Johnson. Masters of the Blues, Vol. 6. N.pl., n.d.
CC-32 Louis Armstrong: The Blues Singers. Masters of the Blues, Vol. 8. N.pl., n.d.
CC-33 Little Brother Montgomery. Masters of the Blues, Vol. 9. N.pl., n.d.
CC-36 Barbeque Bob. Masters of the Blues, Vol. 10. N.pl., n.d.
CC-37 Gut Bucket Trombone: Ike Rodgers. Masters of the Blues, Vol. 11. N.pl., n.d.

COLUMBIA

- C-30034 Robert Johnson: King of the Delta Blues Singers, Volume II. N.pl., n.d.
C-30035 Leadbelly. N.pl., n.d.
C-30036 Bukka White: Parchman Farm. New York, n.d.
C-30496 Blues Before Sunrise: Leroy Carr, Piano and Vocal. New York, n.d.
CL-855 The Bessie Smith Story, Vol. I. N.pl., n.d.
CL-856 The Bessie Smith Story, Vol. II. N.pl., n.d.
CL-857 The Bessie Smith Story, Vol. III. N.pl., n.d.
CL-858 The Bessie Smith Story, Vol. IV. N.pl., n.d.

COLUMBIA (cont.)

- CL-1654 Robert Johnson: King of the Delta Blues Singers. N.p.l., n.d.
 G-30126 Bessie Smith: Any Woman's Blues. N.p.l., n.d. 2 phonodiscs.

CORAL

- CP-58 Out Came the Blues. London, 1970.

FLYRIGHT, FLYRIGHT/MATCHBOX

- LP-103 Goin' Away Walking: Various Artists. Weybridge, U.K., n.d.
 SCM-250 Fort Valley Blues: 1941-43 Field Recordings from Georgia.
 Flyright-Matchbox Library of Congress Series, Vol. 2. Badminton, U.K., n.d.

FOLKWAYS

- FA-2951 Anthology of American Folk Music: Volume One: Ballads.
 New York, 1952. 2 phonodiscs.
 FA-2953 Anthology of American Folk Music: Volume Three: Songs.
 New York, 1952. 2 phonodiscs.
 FJ-2801 Jazz, Vol. 1: South. New York, 1950.
 FJ-2802 Jazz, Vol. 2: The Blues. New York, 1950.

HERWIN

- H-201 Sic 'Em Dogs on Me 1927 to 1939. Glen Cove, N.Y., n.d.
 H-205 Fillin' In Blues 1928-1930. Glen Cove, N.Y., n.d.
 H-208 Cannon's Jug Stompers. New York, 1973- 2 phonodiscs.

HISTORICAL RECORDS

- HLP-1 Rare Blues of the Twenties, No. 1. New York, 1966.
 HLP-2 Rare Blues of the Twenties. Jersey City, N.J., n.d.
 HLP-4 Rare Blues 1927-1935. Jersey City, N.J., n.d.
 HLP-5 Rare Blues 1927-1930. Jersey City, N.J., n.d.
 HLP-15 Pot Hound Blues 1923-1930. Jersey City, N.J., n.d.
 HLP-17 They Sang the Blues, Vol. 1 (1927-1929). Jersey City, N.J., n.d.

HISTORICAL RECORDS (cont.)

HLP-21 Anna Bell, Katherine Henderson, Laura Bryant. Acc. by Clarence Williams' Orchestra 1928-1929. Jersey City, N.J., n.d.

HLP-22 They Sang the Blues 1927-1934. Jersey City, N.J., n.d.

HLP-31 Masters of the Blues 1928-1940. Jersey City, N.J., 1969.

HLP-32 I'm Wild About My Lovin' 1928-1930. Jersey City, N.J., 1969.

HLP-8002 Early Country Music. Jersey City, N.J., n.d.

JOKER

SM-3098 Great Blues Singers. La storia del jazz. Milano, 1971.

SM-3104 The Jug Bands: Memphis Jug Band 1929-1934. La storia del jazz. Milano, 1971.

MAELISH

S-3802 Mississippi Bottom Blues. N.pl., n.d.

S-3803 Low Down Memphis Barrelhouse Blues (1928-1935). New York, n.d.

S-3804 Stop and Listen Blues: The Mississippi Sheiks. New York, n.d.

MELODEON

MLP-7324 The Party Blues. Washington, D.C., n.d.

MERCURY

MG-20822 Big Bill Broonzy Memorial. N.pl., n.d.

MILESTONE

MLP-2001 The Immortal Ma Rainey. New York, 1966.

MLP-2004 The Immortal Blind Lemon Jefferson. New York, 1967.

MLP-2007 Blind Lemon Jefferson, Volume Two. New York, 1968.

MLP-2013 Black Snake Moan: Blind Lemon Jefferson. New York, 1970.

MLP-2018 Pitchin' Boogie: A Second Collection of Boogie Woogie Rarities. New York, 1971.

ORIGIN JAZZ LIBRARY

- OJL-2 Really! The Country Blues. New York, n.d.
- OJL-3 Henry Thomas Sings the Texas Blues. N.pl., n.d.
- OJL-4 The Great Jug Bands. Berkeley, Ca., n.d.
- OJL-5 The Mississippi Blues 1927-1940. Berkeley, Ca., n.d.
- OJL-6 The Country Girls. Berkeley, Ca., n.d.
- OJL-8 Country Blues Encores 1927-1935. Berkeley, Ca., n.d.
- OJL-10 Crying Sam Collins and His Git-Fiddle. N.pl., n.d.
- OJL-11 The Mississippi Blues No. 2: The Delta, 1929-32. Berkeley, Ca., n.d.
- OJL-14 Alabama Country 1927/31. Berkeley, Ca., n.d.
- OJL-15 Rugged Piano Classics 1927-39. Berkeley, Ca., n.d.
- OJL-17 The Mississippi Blues, No. 3: Transition, 1926-1937. Berkeley, Ca., n.d.
- OJL-18 Let's Go Riding. Berkeley, n.d.
- OJL-19 More of That Jug Band Sound 1927-1939. Berkeley, Ca., n.d.
- OJL-20 The Blues in St. Louis 1929-1937. Berkeley, Ca., n.d.
- OJL-21 The Blues in Memphis 1927-39. Berkeley, Ca., n.d.

PALTRAM

- PL-101 The Early Recordings of Memphis Minnie and Kansas Joe (1929-1936). N.pl., n.d.

PIEDMONT

- PLP-13157 Mississippi John Hurt 1963. N.pl., n.d.

PRESTIGE (see BLUESVILLE)

R&F RECORDS

- RF-1 The Country Blues. New York, 1959.
- RF-6 The Jug Bands. New York, 1963.
- RF-8 Sleepy John Estes 1929-1940. New York, 1964.

RBF RECORDS (cont.)

- RF-9 The Country Blues: Volume Two. New York, 1964.
 RF-11 Blues Rediscoveries. New York, 1966.
 RF-12 Piano Blues. New York, 1966.
 RF-14 Blues Roots/Mississippi. New York, 1966.
 RF-15 The Atlanta Blues. New York, 1966.
 RF-16 Blues Roots/Chicago: The 1930's. New York, 1967.
 RF-202 The Rural Blues: A Study of the Vocal and Instrumental Resources. New York, 1964. 2 phonodiscs.

RCA, RCA INTERNATIONAL (CAMDEN)

- 730-581 Memphis Slim (1940-1941). Black & White, Vol. 10.
 France, n.d.
 INT-1085 Think You Need a Shot: Walter Davis. London, 1970.
 INT-1087 Big Joe Williams: Crawl'n' King Snake. London, 1970.
 INT-1088 Sonny Boy Williamson: Bluebird-Blues. London, 1970.
 INT-1175 Travellin' This Lonesome Road: A Victor/Bluebird Anthology.
 London, 1970.
 INT-1177 You Got to Reap What You Sow: Jazz Gillum. London, 1970.
 LPV-518 Bluebird Blues. Vintage Series. New York, 1965.
 LPV-574 Lil Green: Romance in the Dark. Vintage Series. New York,
 1971.
 LPV-577 Feeling Lowdown: Washboard Sam. Vintage Series. New York,
 1971.

RIVERSIDE

- RLP-12-125 Blind Lemon: Classic Folk-Blues by Blind Lemon Jefferson.
 Jazz Archive Series. New York, n.d.
 RM-8803 Georgia Tom and Friends. Classic Jazz Masters. New York,
 n.d.
 RM-8819 Mr. Sykes Blues 1929-1932. Classic Jazz Masters. New
 York, n.d.

ROOTS

- RL-301 Blind Lemon Jefferson: Volume 1. N.pl., n.d.
- RL-305 "Cross Cut Saw Blues": Tommy McClennan (1939-1941). N.pl., n.d.
- RL-306 Blind Lemon Jefferson: Volume 2. N.pl., n.d.
- RL-307 The Memphis Area 1927-1932. N.pl., n.d.
- RL-308 Frank Stokes with Dan Sane and Will Batts (1927-1929). N.pl., n.d.
- RL-310 Missouri and Tennessee (1924-1937). N.pl., n.d.
- RL-311 Harmonicas, Washboards, Fiddles, Jugs (1926-1933). N.pl., n.d.
- RL-312 Texas Country Music, Vol. 1 (1927-1936). N.pl., n.d.
- RL-313 "Down South" (Louisiana-Mississippi-Alabama-Florida). N.pl., b.d.
- RL-314 Mississippi Blues, Vol. 3 (1928-1942). N.pl., n.d.
- RL-315 Texas Country Music, Vol. 2 (1927-1937). N.pl., n.d.
- RL-316 The Country Fiddlers. N.pl., n.d.
- RL-317 Lucille Bogan and Walter Roland (1930-1935). N.pl., n.d.
- RL-318 The East Coast States (Georgia-Carolinas-Virginia) (1927-1940). N.pl., n.d.
- RL-319 Up and Down the Mississippi (1926-1940). N.pl., n.d.
- RL-321 Great Harmonica Players (1927-1940): Volume 2. N.pl., n.d.
- RL-322 Memphis Jug Band Volume 1: 1927-1929. N.pl., n.d.
- RL-323 Memphis Blues (1927-1939). N.pl., n.d.
- RL-324 King of the Georgia Blues Singers: Blind Willie McTell (1929-1935). N.pl., n.d.
- RL-325 Alabama Country Blues (1924-1933). N.pl., n.d.
- RL-326 The East Coast States: Vol. 2 (1924-1938). N.pl., n.d.
- RL-327 Texas Country Music Vol. 3 (1927-1937). N.pl., n.d.

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- RL-329 Memphis Blues (1927-1939), Vol. 2. N.pl., n.d.
- RL-330 The Famous 1928 Tommy Johnson-Ishman Bracey Session.
N.pl., n.d.
- RL-333 Kings of Memphis Town (1927-1930). N.pl., n.d.
- RL-334 Country Blues Obscurities, Vol. 1 (1926-1936). N.pl., n.d.
- RL-335 Texas & Louisiana Country (1927-1932). N.pl., n.d.
- RL-337 Memphis Jug Band: Volume 2 (1927-1934). N.pl., n.d.
- RL-340 Country Blues Obscurities, Vol. 2 (1927-1936). N.pl.,
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- SDR-191 Volume One: Peetie Wheatstraw: The Devil's Son-In-Law
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- LP-2001 The Victoria Spivey Recorded Legacy of the Blues. New
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- S-1219 The Blues of Sleepy John Estes: Volume One. The Jazz
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- VLP-15 Clara Smith: Volume One. London, 1967.
 VLP-16 Clara Smith: Volume Two. London, 1968.
 VLP-17 Clara Smith: Volume Three. London, 1969.
 VLP-23 Maggie Jones: Volume One 1924-5. London, 1969.
 VLP-25 Maggie Jones: Volume Two 1925-6. London, 1969.
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- L-1001 Mississippi Blues 1927-1941. New York, n.d.
 L-1002 Ten Years in Memphis 1927-1937. New York, n.d.
 L-1003 St. Louis Town 1929-1933. New York, n.d.
 L-1004 Tex-Arkana-Louisiana Country 1927-1932. New York, n.d.
 L-1005 Blind Willie McTell: The Early Years (1927-1933). New York, n.d.
 L-1006 Alabama Blues 1927-1931. New York, n.d.
 L-1007 Jackson Blues 1928-1938. New York, n.d.
 L-1008 Frank Stoke's Dream 1927-1931 (The Memphis Blues). New York, n.d.
 L-1009 Mississippi Moaners 1927-42. New York, n.d.
 L-1010 Buddy Boy Hawkins & His Buddies. New York, n.d.
 L-1011 The Young Big Bill Broonzy 1928-1935. New York, n.d.
 L-1012 The Georgia Blues 1927-1933. New York, n.d.
 L-1014 Bo Carter: Greatest Hits 1930-1940. New York, n.d.
 L-1015 Favorite Country Blues-Guitar Duets (1929-1937). New York, n.d.
 L-1016 Guitar Wizards (1926-1935). New York, n.d.
 L-1017 Bessie Jackson & Walter Roland (1927-1935). New York, n.d.
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YAZOO (cont.)

- L-1019 Scrapper Blackwell (1928-1934). New York, n.d.
- L-1020 Charley Patton: Founder of the Delta Blues. New York, n.d. 2 phonodiscs.
- L-1021 Memphis Jamboree 1927-1936. New York, n.d.
- L-1025 Cripple Clarence Lofton & Walter Davis. New York, n.d.
- L-1026 Bottleneck Blues Guitar Classics 1926-1937. New York, n.d.
- L-1027 Glifford Gibson: Beat You Doing It. New York, n.d.
- L-1028 Barrelhouse Blues 1927-1936. New York, n.d.
- L-1029 Papa Charlie Jackson: Fat Mouth 1924-1929. New York, n.d.
- L-1030 St. Louis Blues 1929-1935: The Depression. New York, n.d.
- L-1031 "Funny Papa" Smith: The Original Howling Wolf 1930-1931. New York, n.d.
- L-1032 Blues From the Western States 1927-1949. New York, n.d.
- L-1033 Roosevelt Sykes: The Country Blues Piano Ace 1929-1932. New York, n.d.
- L-1034 Bo Carter 1931-1940. New York, n.d.
- L-1035 Big Bill Broonzy 1928-1935: Do That Guitar Rag. New York, n.d.
- L-1036 Teroy Carr & Scraper Blackwell: Naptown Blues 1929-1934. New York, n.d.
- L-1037 Blind Willie McTell 1927-1935. New York, n.d.
- L-1038 Lonesome Road Blues: 45 Years in the Mississippi Delta 1926-1941. New York, n.d.
- L-1039 Tampa Red: Bottleneck Guitar 1928-1937. New York, n.d.
- L-1041 Georgia Tom Dorsey 1928-1932: Come On Mama Do That Dance. New York, n.d.

APPENDIX A: A DESCRIPTION OF SOME OF THE MOST FREQUENTLY
RECURRING FORMULAS IN THE CORPUS UNDER ANALYSIS

Ideally, every formula should be listed in all its manifestations, since this would best demonstrate the range of possibilities within the blues formulaic system. But such a list would be very long and impractical for the purposes of this analysis. In this appendix, however, nine x-formulas and nine r-formulas which occur in very high frequency in the blues will be described. In the following two appendices, all the manifestations of a selected x- and r-formula (as found in the corpus under analysis) will be listed.

To say that these formulas are the twenty most frequent in the blues is not quite accurate; they are the twenty most frequent in the corpus under analysis, which represents only a fraction of all the blues which were recorded on race records. It is doubtful, however, that a larger corpus would reveal formulas which are more recurrent than these.

The method employed to determine which formulas to choose involved reading through the computer concordance print-out and looking for those phrases which seemed to recur a fair number of times. The first search turned up about sixty possible formulas. Each of these was analyzed to determine its possible outer boundaries; that is, all of the possible manifestations were determined for each phrase. These different possible manifestations were then searched out in the concordance. The ten x-formulas and the ten r-formulas which recurred the most times in all their manifestations were then selected from this initial group of sixty.

Of all the formulas chosen, the x-formulas occur in much greater numbers than do the r-formulas. This is a direct result of the greater

restrictions placed upon the r-formulas. Because their rhyme-words must always remain the same, and must always appear at the end of the phrase, r-formulas are considerably limited in their lexical choices and their syntactical variations. For example, there are two highly recurrent formulas: +human treat +human in some manner, an x-formula, and +human treat +human right, an r-formula. The x-formula has considerable lexical choice in the some manner slot (right, wrong, good, bad, etc.), whereas the r-formula must choose the word right to fill the slot, since right is the rhyme-word in the phrase.

The x-formula is also capable of syntactical re-ordering and embellishments, such as +human don't mistreat you or +human treat you right all the time, which are fairly synonymous with the meaning of the corresponding r-formula, but which are not possible within the r-formula structure because they would alter the rhyme. Thus, where different variations may be called members of the same x-formula, the same variations would have to be considered separate r-formulas; you don't treat me right and you mistreat me may be the same x-formula, but because the defining characteristics of these two phrases differ, they are not members of the same r-formula. In the corpus under analysis, therefore, there are 160 examples of this x-formula, while only forty-five examples of its corresponding r-formula.

Each formula in this appendix will be described according to its semantic structure, and an appropriate tree-diagram will be given for each one in order to illustrate their structures. All major manifestations of the formulas will be discussed, with appropriate examples, and, as well, any interesting minor variations will be pointed out. Particular care will be given to embedding, adjectival, and adverbial elements, and

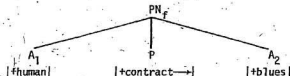
their effects upon the basic meaning of the formulas. Lastly, a running statistical account will be included for the various manifestations under discussion.

In the following two appendices, the same type of description of the two selected formulas will be given, but in addition, all members of these two formulas, as found in the corpus, will be listed. This will demonstrate the wide range of possible variation within the confines of a single formula. Indeed, for all these formulas, the differences between the many manifestations are just as important as their basic semantic similarities. We have seen that in the analysis of Garfield Akers' record repertoire (Chapter XV), the particular manifestation of a highly recurrent formula is more significant than the larger body of manifestations to which it is related. When viewing the corpus as a whole, however, it is the underlying, deep-structure, generalized predication which assumes the greatest importance.

+human have the blues (x-formula)

This x-formula defines the form of song which is being sung: the blues. Its A_1 argument is always +human, since only humans are capable of having the blues; although non-human subjects might be personified, thus fitting the +human semantic category. The A_2 argument is always the blues, though as will be shown shortly, it may undergo various adjectival modifications. The predicate may be described as "to contract or to come down with, as in the case of a cold or fever," and this predicate usually generates one of two possible surface-level verbs: have or get. The overall structure of the formula might be represented by

the following diagram:



The following two examples demonstrate the two most common manifestations of this formula:

- 1 I had the blues everytime I see your face
Well there ain't no other one woman, ooo well well in this
world can take your place. (WHEA-16)
- 2 I cut that joker so long deep and wide
You got the blues, and still ain't satisfied. (HURT-6)

The predicate may, however, generate other verbs, although this is very rare. There are only five instances of the verb take used in this context:

- 3 Now a coloured man go to the river; take him a seat and sit down
If he takes the blues, he come on back to town. (McTW-29)

and only two couplets exhibiting the following manifestations:

- 4 I keep the blues all night, and the whole day through
I'm so full of blues, I don't know what to do. (CARRL-12)
- 5 Got the blues; can't be satisfied
Keep the blues, I'll catch the train and ride. (HURT-6)

Whether the verbs keep and be full of truly fulfill the criteria of the deep structure predicate of this formula is uncertain, but they certainly represent related forms.

Another possible manifestation, which occurs only once in the corpus, seems to include the extraformulaic element of negation within the specific semantic features of the surface-level verb:

- 6 Oh maybe it's the blues that keeps me worried all the time
If I could lose these weary blues that's on my mind. (DORST-5)

In the sense that lose is the opposite of contract in this context, the above example seems to be a special case of negation.

These verb-variations, however, are very rare. Almost all examples of this formula generate either have or get. The more important variation in this formula occurs in the modification of the noun blues. It is very common to add an adjectival element to blues in this formula, and this element may include virtually any word or phrase:

- 7 I walked down the street; I couldn't be satisfied
I had the no no blues; I couldn't keep from, I couldn't keep
from crying. (BAKW-2)
- 8 I got the Maxwell Street blues, mama and it just won't pay
Because the Maxwell Street women going to carry me to my grave
(JACKC-15)
- 9 Got the barrelhousing blues; feeling awfully dry
I can't drink moonshine, because I'm afraid I'll die
(RAIN-3)

The adjectival choice is seemingly endless. This extraformulaic element almost always precedes the word blues, but there are a few cases of it following the word:

- 10 I've have the blues about my money; had the blues because I'm
feeling bad
But when my sweet woman quit me, them was the worst blues I
ever had (GIBC-1)
- 11 I've got the blues for my baby; my babe got the blues for me
For she went and caught the Big Four; she beat it back to
Tennessee (JORC-3)

The embedding element, common with so many other formulas, occurs with this formula only three times in the corpus under analysis:

- 12 I can tell when (I've got the blues)(the blues is coming); I
can't help but feel so lowdown
Then I want to get drunk, and pitch a bugger all over town
(SMIJ-9)
- 13 Women all singing the blues; I can't raise my right hand
What make a woman have them blues; when she knows somebody's
got her man (BAKW-3)

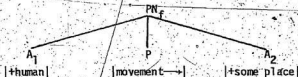
- 14 Women all singing the blues; I ain't raise my right hand
What make a woman have them blues; when she knows somebody's
 got her man (BAKW-7)

This x-formula occurs approximately 110 times in the corpus. Other phrases, in which the blues is personified, or at least in which the blues becomes the A_1 argument and the +human becomes the A_2 argument, also occur and might be considered closely related to this formula. The following are a few examples of these phrases, the first of which is the most common, occurring eight times in the corpus:

- 15 I mean I went to the depot, and set my suitcase down
The blues overtake me, and tears come rolling down (JEFB-20)
- 16 Blues grabbed mama's child, and it tore me all upside down
 travel on poor Bub; just can't turn you around (JOHR-17)
- 17 Now my blues got at me, Lord and run me from tree to tree
 You should have heard me begging, Mr. Blues don't murder me
 (MONTE-5)

+human come to some place (x-formula)

This is the most frequently recurring formula in the blues, but at the same time, the most diffuse. The A_1 argument carries a +human feature, while the A_2 argument includes the large and general semantic feature of +some place. The predicate may be described as "movement towards." In diagram form, the formula looks something like the following:



The predicate and A_2 argument may generate a vast number of different words and phrases. Under the A_2 feature +some place, for example, may fall any type of location from man-made structures to natural sites:

18. Uncle Jim went to jail with a heavy load
They gave him thirty days on the county road. (RQBB-1)
19. I went down to the ocean, just to get a permahent wave
My woman got a new way of loving, man and it won't behave (JONJ-2)

Place names often fill the A_2 slot:

20. Still I ain't going to worry; and I ain't going to raise no sand
I'm going back to Friar's Point, down in sweet old Dixieland (McCOR-2)
21. I'm going to Third Alley, and bring my rider home
Because these women in Third Alley won't let my rider alone (SM1IV-2)

or directions of the compass:

22. I'm going back South, where it's warm the whole year round
I'll be so glad when my train pulls up in town (BLACK-7)
23. Going North child, where I can be free
Where there's no hardships, like in Tennessee (JONM-16)

or the place may be left unspecified:

24. I got a letter mama; you ought to heard it read
Says you coming back baby, and I'll be almost dead (THPA-1)
25. Say excuse me mama; I don't mean no harm
Just come here to sing this little song (BURS-2)
26. Molly Man's coming; I hear his voice
He's got hot tamales, and it's just my choice (MASM-1)

The predicate may vary almost as much as the A_2 argument. The most common manifestations of the predicate generate come and go (see couplets 23 and 24, for example), but such verbs as hurry to, run to, walk to, reach, get to, start to, roll back to, and fly to also occur. The possible combinations of these many different verbs and places gives this

formula countless manifestations.

Some of these manifestations occur quite frequently, and may be considered more precise formulas in themselves; for example, +human go to the station/depot, which occurs thirty-four times:

- 27 I went down to the station, up to the train
I couldn't buy no ticket for shaking that thing (VINC-18)

+human come here, where the here may be deleted or may be placed before the verb, as in the following example:

- 28 Here come the biggest boy, coming right from school
Hollering and crying like a doggone fool (JAMJ-2)

This manifestation occurs sixty-two times. The phrase +human go +direction (see examples 22 and 23) occurs twenty-six times, and +human go to +place name (see examples 20 and 21) occurs 118 times in the corpus.

The phrase +human come back occurs thirty times; +human come in here occurs twenty-six times; +human go to/up the mountain occurs twenty-four times; +human go to the river occurs twenty-five times; +human go downtown occurs twenty-seven times. The phrase +human go to +human may not appear to be a member of this formula, since the A_2 argument is not overtly "some place," but the semantic feature for the A_2 in this manifestation is more accurately some place where +human is located. This manifestation occurs forty-six times.

The most common manifestations of this formula, as already pointed out, generate either the verb come or go. One interesting manifestation, however, converts the predication into an equative predication, wherein the predicate becomes the verb be. This manifestation may be represented as +human be some place bound, and the feature some place is usually filled by a place name, as in the following example:

29. I'm Texas bound; got no time to lose
Because my sweet mama quit me; left me with the Texas blues
(JACKC-17)

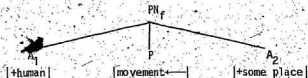
This formula is often prefaced by embedding elements, but only one such element occurs with any frequency: the PN_{emb} see prefices the manifestation +human come fifteen times, as in the following example:

30. It was early in the evening; sun was going down
Seen a lassie coming, all dressed in brown (EDWT-1)

This formula, in all its many manifestations, occurs approximately 860 times in the corpus, and it is by far the largest formula uncovered by this study. In terms of the formulaic analysis of individual singers or songs, it might be best to view the different manifestations of this formula as formulas in themselves, but regardless of the manifestation, every phrase in this group entails the deep-level predication +human, movement towards +some place.

+human go away from some place (x-formula)

This x-formula is obviously related to the previous one. It is, in a sense, a mirror-image of the go to some place formula. It also may take a number of different A_2 arguments and predicates, and may be represented by the following diagram:



The two most common surface predicates are the verbs go away and leave, as in the following two examples:

- 31 I'm going away; now don't you want to go
I'm going to stop at a place, I haven't never been before
 (JEFB-27)
- 32 When he was leaving, I couldn't hear nothing but that whistle blow
 And the man at the throttle, Lord he wasn't coming back no more
 (BOGL-18)

The only other manifestation of the predicate which occurs with any frequency is get away or get out, but this form is rare in comparison to leave and go away:

- 33 You will think you left trouble all behind
Get away from home; then it will roll across your mind
 (CHATL-1)

Even rarer are the verbs walk away, run away, scamper away, creep away, and move away, with only one or two examples each in the corpus.

Although this formula allows as much variation in its A_2 argument as does the previous formula, in actual usage it seems more limited. In a great many cases, the place is left unspecified, often only identified as here. Thus, the most common A_2 argument which accompanies the verb leave is either here or here deleted, as in example 32. In all, the manifestation +human leave here occurs eighty-two times in the corpus.

Similarly, when the manifestation of the predicate is the verb go away, the A_2 argument is again most frequently here. This manifestation, which might be called +human go away from here almost always deletes the from here in its surface structure, as in example 31, and may even delete the away, as in this example:

- 34 I'm going I'm going; crying won't make me stay
The more you cry, further you drive me away. (HURT-4)

In all, this manifestation occurs 174 times in the corpus.

Some manifestations with more specific A_2 arguments include the following: +human leave home, nine times; +human leave the station, five

times; +human leave town, thirty times; and +human leave +place name, twenty times.

The formula occurs, prefaced by embedding elements or followed by adverbial elements, although no one extraformulaic element occurs with any frequency. Some of the more interesting manifestations include multiple verbs, all of which mean movement away from. The following are some examples:

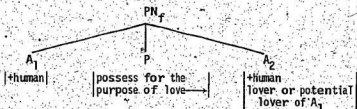
- 35 I got the key to the highway; billed out and ready to go
I'm going to leave here running, because walking is most too-
 slow (GILL-8)
- 36 I'm going to leave here walking; going down number sixty-one
 If I find my baby, we are going to have some fun (BATT-2)
- 37 I've got a girl; her name is Joan
She leaves here walking running fast; chocolate to the bone
 (THOH-9)

In actuality, these manifestations exhibit extraformulaic modifiers on the verb leave, in the form of gerunds.

In all its manifestations, this formula occurs over three hundred times.

+human got/have +human (x-formula)

In this formula, the A_2 argument has the feature of lover or potential lover of the A_1 argument. The predicate has the general meaning of "to possess for the purpose of love" or "to have a recognized love relationship with someone." Its diagrammatic representation might be the following:



Almost all of the examples of this formula fall into one of three surface manifestations: the predicate is either have, got, or get. The predicate manifestations have and got seem to be synonymous; the predicate get, however, implies more activity, or a search for someone to possess. The following couplets show these three common manifestations:

- 38 Said I woke up this morning, just about the break of day
Some man had my woman, and the worried blues had me (TORE-2)
- 39 I've got a good girl, and I've got a lazy friend
 And if I tell about her, he always tell me where she been (FOXJ-1)
- 40 If you don't want me baby, just leave me alone
I can get another woman to carry your business on (EAST-2)

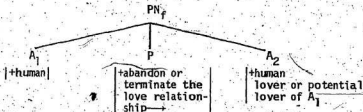
The most numerous manifestation is the got predicate, with 281 occurrences in the corpus, followed by the have predicate, with eighty-eight examples, and the get predicate, with seventy-four occurrences.

Other manifestations are very rare by comparison. The only other manifestations which occur more than twice in the corpus preface the formula with embedding elements: +human used to have +human, five examples, and +human wish +human have +human, four examples. In all, this formula occurs 460 times in the corpus, with all but seventeen examples falling into one of the three major manifestations.

+human leave/quit +human (x-formula)

This formula is interesting in that it combines the ideas of the two previous formulas: possessing someone and leaving, thereby dispossessing someone. As with the previous formula, the second +human is usually a lover or potential lover of the first +human. The predicate means "to

abandon or to terminate a love relationship." The following is its diagrammatic representation:



There are only two predicate manifestations of this formula: the verb leave and the verb quit. The verb leave might imply the actual physical removal of oneself from a place where someone is, as opposed to quit, which does not imply any movement, but the two verbs seem to be synonymous as used in the blues. The following are two examples:

41. Now I'm leaving you mama, Lord and it won't be long
 Now if you don't believe I'm leaving, please count the days
 I'm gone (ARNK-31)
42. Depot agent please turn your depot around
 My woman done quit me now; going to leave your town
 (LENN-4)

The leave manifestation occurs 130 times and the quit manifestation occurs eighty-eight times in the corpus.

This formula is prefaced by a number of different embedding elements: try to quit +human, fifteen times; want to leave +human, three times; hate to leave +human, four times; among others. One of the more numerous minor manifestations includes a temporal adverbial element as a preface: the day +human quit +human, ten occurrences.

Another common manifestation may, in fact, be a combination of two x-formulas: +human go away and +human leave +human. In its most expanded form it appears as in the following couplet:

- 43 Early this morning my baby made me sore
I'm going away to leave you; ain't coming back no more
 (BLAK-1)

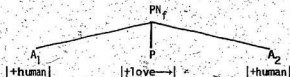
but it may also take a more contracted form:

- 44 What did I ever do that made you leave so all alone
Since you've gone and left me, I do nothing but weep and moan
 (WHIJ-2)

In all, there are twenty-two examples of this condensed double-x-formula phrase in the corpus. The corpus contains approximately three hundred examples of this formula in all its manifestations.

+human love +human (x-formula)

This formula is fairly straight-forward. Neither the two arguments nor the predicate needs any further explanation. The formula may be represented by the following diagram:



The only manifestation of the predicate is the verb love, although there are twenty examples of the phrase +human like +human in the corpus, which may or may not be considered a part of this formula.

By far, the most common manifestation of this formula is the unembellished one, as in this example:

- 45 I love my baby; my baby don't love me
But I really love that woman; can't stand to leave her be
 (JOHR-1)

There are 253 examples of this manifestation in the corpus.

This formula, however, is prone to considerable PN_{emb} embellishment.

as the following examples demonstrate:

- 46 Look here pretty mama, what you done done
You done made me love you; now your man done come (ANDE-1)
- 47 I just flutters when I see you, like a little bird up in his nest
Lord sometime I think I love you; sometime I think I love my
 little gal the best (DAVIN-23)
- 48 Right or wrong, I must be with my little southern Chockta
I don't know that she loves me, but she still calls me her
 southpaw (MOOA-2)
- 49 Well I tried to love a sweet mama, but she couldn't understand
 But I know she realized the trouble, since she met another man
 (JONL-7)
- 50 Had a little girl; she was little and low
Used to love me, but she don't go more (FULB-9)
- 51 Now you wanted me to love you, and you treated me mean
 You might *give a thought* on my nightly dream (BROW-1)

The occurrences of this formula prefaced by these embedding elements is as follows: make, twenty-five times; think, thirteen times; know eight times; try, eight times; used to, six times; and want twelve times. This same formula is also prefaced by the locutionary element tell nine times, as in this example:

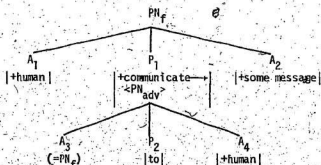
- 52 You told me that you loved me; say you love me all your life
 I caught you around the corner telling that same lie twice
 (CHATP-5)

The total number of examples of this formula in the corpus is approximately 350.

+human speak to +human (x-formula)

It is difficult to know whether to call this a true formula, or merely an up-graded locutionary element. In example 52, above, it seems to act as an extraformulaic element, whereas in many other cases it seems

to stand on its own. This formula is actually a more complex predication than any of the previously discussed formulas, since it involves a mandatory downgraded predication within its predicate, as the following diagram shows:



This rather complex diagram can be interpreted as follows: There is a predication PN_f which may be described as +human communicate some message. An adverbial element PN_{adv} is included within the semantic features of the predicate of the PN_f +communicate, wherein the entire PN_f is embedded in one argument A_3 of the adverbial predication PN_{adv} . The resulting downgraded predication may be read as (PN_f : +human communicate some message) to +human.

The most common manifestation of the P_1 predicate of this formula is the verb tell, and in the most frequent manifestation of the formula, the A_2 argument is seemingly deleted, giving the following surface structure:

- 53 My mother told me, don't you weep and moan
Because son there'll be a woman here, when you dead and gone
(CARRL-39)

In actual fact, of course, the some message, or A_2 argument of the formula is filled by the r-formula in the line; in example 53, the A_2 message is don't you weep and moan. This manifestation occurs over 430 times in the

corpus.

Other verbs may also fill the P_1 predicate slot, although none are as common as tell; the verbs ask, talk to, and say to also occur in the corpus. Of these, ask is by far the most frequent, and the following manifestation occurs eighty times in the corpus:

54. Anybody ask you, who wrote this worried song
 tell them you don't know the writer; he'd rather had his
 happy song (BRAC-6)

Another manifestation of this formula, which occurs twenty-nine times, includes the message in its A_2 argument separate from its linked r-formula:

55. I got something to tell you, just before you go
 It ain't nothing baby; turn your lamp down low (VIRG-1)

The some message slot is filled with the non-specific word something.

There can be no doubt that this manifestation is a formula in itself, since it does not rely on the r-formula to complete its internal structure.

A number of embedding elements preface this formula, of which two occur quite frequently:

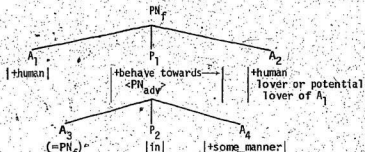
56. Now let me tell you what that mean old train will do
 It will take your woman, and blow the smoke on you (DARB-3)
57. Now won't you come here baby; sit down on my knee
 Now I just want to tell you, black man how you have treated
 me (JOHLS-4)

The manifestation in example 56 occurs thirty-four times, and the one in couplet 57 occurs thirty-two times. In both cases, the A_2 argument is sometimes filled with the word something and sometimes with the r-formula in the line.

In all its forms, this complex formula occurs approximately 690 times.

+human treat +human in some manner (x-formula)

Structurally, this formula is very similar to the previous one. Thematically, it is close to +human love +human, since the second +human is usually a lover or potential lover of the first +human. The predicate may be described as "to behave towards" or "to have a certain effect upon." This "treatment" may be physical or mental, and a mandatory adverbial predication in some manner describes the nature of this "treatment." In diagram form, the formula looks very much like the previously discussed formula, because of this mandatory adverbial element:



The P_1 predicate almost always generates some form of the verb treat, although there are five examples of the verb do and one example of the verb misuse in the corpus. The most variable element of this predication is the A_4 argument, which can take a number of positive or negative images:

- 58 I'm going to leave this town baby, and I swear I ain't coming back no more
I've been treated so bad, I can't be happy no more (PALM-1)
- 59 You treated me wrong; I treated you right
 I worked for you both day and night. (SMIB-8)

- 60 And you treat me good, Lord will bless your soul
If you treat me bad, mama to hell you surely go (MISSM-1)
- 61 There's one thing I like about that gal of mine
She treats me right, and love me all the time (MOOK-1)
- 62 That's all right mama; that's all right for you
Treat me lowdown and dirty, any old way you do (CRUD-3)
- 63 You can treat me mean, mean as you can be
 But there is coming a day, you will be longing for me
 (VINC-6)
- 64 If you don't treat me no better, I ain't going to be your man
^{no more}
 I love you it's true, but I will have to let you go
 (GILL-15)
- 65 Judge I done killed my woman, because she treated me so unkind
Treated me so unkind, till I swear I lost my mind (CARRL-20)

There are several other manifestations of the A_4 argument, and although together all these manifestations make up a sizable group, individually they occur rather infrequently in the corpus: example 63 has nine analogues in the corpus; example 64 occurs six times; while the others occur from one to four times each.

The most common manifestation of this formula places the A_4 argument in the position of a morphemic prefix, turning treat into mistreat:

- 66 If I mistreat you mama, I sure don't mean no harm
 I'm a honeydripping papa; I don't know right from wrong
 (MOOP-2)

This manifestation occurs sixty-two times in the corpus, and is a good example of one of the many possible varieties of surface structure which a deep-level predication can generate.

There are other surface structures as well. Note that example 58 is a passive construction: I've been treated so bad (by someone). A surface-level re-ordering of the syntax has occurred here, and most manifestations of this formula may undergo this type of re-ordering. Thus,

the following example is analogous to example 66, but in a passive position:

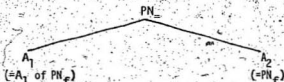
- 67 Ain't no one can change my mind
I've been mistreated, and I don't mind dying (CRAWR-1)

In even more radical surface manifestations, the predicate treat is generated as a surface-level noun. Note the following two examples:

- 68 I worked hard from Monday, until late Saturday night
And you's a dirty mistreater; you ain't treating me right (BOGL-5)

- 69 You can always tell when you woman's got another man
She will take your bad treatments, and do the best she can (BLACW-9)

In example 68, the formulaic predication PN_f is embedded in an equative predication PN_e , where the first argument of the PN_e is equal to the A_1 argument of the PN_f . The equative predication looks like this:



The entire construction may be paraphrased as "you are the one who treats me in a 'mis' manner." The word me has been deleted; the mis takes its proper place as a prefix to treat; the phrase the one who becomes the morpheme er attached as a suffix to treat; and the surface-level sentence becomes you are a mistreater. The word dirty is an optional adjectival extraformulaic element.

The underlined phrase in example 69 may be paraphrased as "she will accept that fact that you treat her bad." The phrase will accept the fact that may be seen as an embedding element (and an auxiliary will); accept is transformed into the verb take, and the phrase the fact that

is expressed as a morphemic suffix ment attached to the nominalized verb treat. With syntactical re-ordering, the phrase becomes she will take your bad treatment of her. The of her is deleted in an optional transformation, leaving the phrase as expressed in example 69.

These more complex manifestations, however, make up only a small minority of all the examples of this formula in the corpus. The second and third most common manifestations do not specify the manner of treatment within the x-formula:

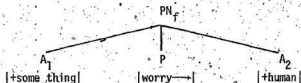
- 70 Oh Roberta what in the world you mean
Honey the way you treat me beats all I ever seen (LEDB-2)
- 71 I love my mama, and I'll tell the world I do
Because can't nobody treat me, hohey like my rider do.
 (LASK-2)

In example 70, the some manner slot is filled by the word way, which imparts little information as to the manner of treatment; the description of the "way" is left to the linked r-formula: beats all I ever seen. In example 71, the some manner slot is filled directly by the r-formula; that is, the r-formula is embedded in the A_4 argument of the x-formula's predication. There are eighteen examples of the first phrase and twenty-four examples of the second phrase in the corpus under analysis.

In all, there are over 160 examples of this formula in the corpus.

some thing worry +human (x-formula)

This formula, like the previous one, may take several different syntactical forms. The first argument may be filled by any word or phrase, either human or -human, which is capable of causing worry. The predicate is usually filled by the verb worry, but may also generate the verbs trouble and bother:



In its simplest form, this formula occurs fifteen times, as in this example:

- 72 Oh baby what's the matter with you
You worry me woman; babe I don't know what to do (McFAB-1)

But this formula occurs more frequently in syntactically inverted forms; the most common manifestation exhibiting a passive transformation and the deletion of the A_1 argument:

- 73 ~~Now man. man. man.~~
Said I'm worried now baby; won't be worried long (BIRB-1)

In the above example, a deeper-level paraphrase of the manifestation would be "I am worried by something," but the by something has been deleted in the surface structure. This manifestation occurs forty-one times in the corpus.

In another common manifestation, the Pn_{emb} keep is inserted in the passive structure: something keep you are worried by something. The equative verb are and the phrase by something are deleted; forming the surface manifestation:

74. I'm going away baby to wear you off my mind
For you keeps me worried; a-bothered all the time (NELST-1)

In this form, the formula occurs twenty-five times with the verb worry and four times with the verb trouble.

Similar to the passive construction is another transformation which makes the verb worry intransitive. The usual A_2 of the predication then becomes the subject, and the A_1 argument is placed in a prepositional phrase: +human worry about something. The phrase about something is

then deleted, in most cases, leaving the simple phrase +human worry. This manifestation is almost always accompanied by a negation element, as in the following example:

- 75 Mother please don't worry; this is all my prayer
Just say your son is gone; I'm out in the world somewhere
(ODEN-3)

There are nineteen examples of this manifestation in the corpus.

In two isolated examples, the predicate is realized as a noun:

- 76 I worried a long time ago, and you was as happy as you could be
So now it's your worry; I'm glad you have set me free
(WASBS-32)
- 77 She didn't have no worry; didn't have a lick at a snake
She didn't even cook her meals; ooo well well I mean she really
had got a break
(WHEA-26)

and in one case as an adjective:

- 78 Now the blues so worrisome mama, between midnight and day
Now the blues done caused my woman hon' to run away
(COLFJ-3)

The formula appears with several different embedding elements, such as get (i.e., become) and be no use to, as well as several auxiliary elements, such as have to and should. In all, this formula occurs 170 times in the corpus.

+human have the blues (r-formula)

The description of this r-formula is the same as that of its x-formula counterpart, +human have the blues (see pp. 523-26). The only major difference is that the A_2 argument cannot be followed by an adjectival element, as in examples 10 and 11, since the word blues must be retained at the end of the phrase for rhyming purposes.

The most common manifestation has the verb get in its surface pred-

icate, as in the following example:

79 Ain't got no stockings; ain't got no shoes
Know I've got the Memphis Jug Band blues (P00J-1)

The get form occurs forty-three times, whereas the have form occurs only eleven times in the corpus.

One phrase, which may or may not be considered a part of this formula, is the following:

80 Hey Mr. mailman did you bring me any news
 Because if you didn't, it will give me those special delivery blues (WALES-1)

This example may be paraphrased as "it will cause me to have the blues," where the verb cause is an embedding element attached to the formula. There are ten examples of this interesting manifestation in the corpus. In all, there are over eighty examples of this r-formula in the corpus under analysis.

+human cry (r-formula)

The predication for this r-formula is quite simple, being a one-argument predication:



The flexibility of blues rhyme allows the conjugations cried and cries, as well as cry, in the surface predicate of this formula. Because this formula is so short, it is invariably embellished with extraformulaic elements, as in the following examples:

- 81 Well goodbye Red; now ain't going to cry
Well I ain't going to frown; wouldn't tell you no lie (WILLS-22)
- 82 One day I sit thinking, when the rain pour down outside.
And the more I thought, the more I began to cry (BLACK-6)
- 83 I had a little Kitty; I called her mine
Way in the night, I could hear her cry (COVB-1)
- 84 Sister and brother you needn't have cried
The kids in the school are ready to write (WILLJ-3)
- 85 Sometimes he makes me happy; then sometimes he makes me cry
He had me to the place, where I wish to God that I could die (MEMM-6)
- 86 Once I couldn't stand to see you cry.
But I feel all the same mama, if you die (SPAN-1)

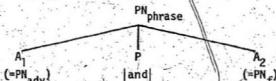
The most frequent of these manifestations is example 85, which occurs thirteen times in the corpus.

But the formula is also embellished in another way. Often another complete predication will be attached to the formula, usually describing the physical movements and gestures which accompany the action of crying. Most of these predications never occur by themselves, and cannot, therefore, be called formulas in their own right. They are, instead, complex adverbial elements, although they cannot be represented semantically in the same way as can other adverbial elements. The following are examples of these strange manifestations:

- 87 Lord said blues jumped a rabbit; run him for a solid mile
Lord that fool couldn't catch him, and he fell right down and cry (RACH-4)
- 88 And I locked in the death cell, and drop my weary head and cry
I told the Sing Sing prison board, this ain't like being outside (COLFB-1)
- 89 Mama now she told me, ooo mmm till I hold her head and cry
Well well well some of these women now done made up their minds
all the time (WHEA-1)
- 90 I was locked outdoors; huddled myself all night long and cried
I'm going crazy; crazy as can be (MEMM-23)

- 91 If my black angel would leave me, I believe that I would die
And if I see him looking at another woman, I just scream and cry
(BOGL-10)
- 92 Now that last cruel papa he blacked my eye
Then left me alone to sigh and cry (WATE-10)
- 93 Now you see me coming; now mama heist your window high
But you know I'm going to leave you; girl I know you're going to
grieve and cry (BIGB-4)
- 94 Many day I sit down; weep and cry
That's why I'm dying to be by your side (OWEG-1)
- 95 I can't count the times, I stoled away and cried
Sugar the blues ain't on me, but things ain't going right
(JEFF-22)
- 96 Boo hoo, wring my hands and cry
I'm thinking about the loving that I let go by (CANG-1)
- 97 I was standing at the terminal; arms folded up and cried
Crying I wonder what train taking that brown of mine.
(HICR-13)

In each case, the underlined phrase consists of two predications linked by the conjunction and. If the first predication is considered an adverbial element PN_{adv} , then the entire phrase may look like this:



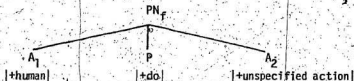
The frequency of these forms in the corpus is the following: example 87, three times; example 88, twenty-two times; examples 89 and 90, one time each; example 91, five times; example 92, two times, example 93 and 94, one time each; example 95, four times; example 96, five times, and example 97, two times.

Whether these different manifestations are to be considered all members of the same formula is a matter of debate, but in all, there are

approximately eighty-five examples of this formula in the corpus.

+human do unspecified action (r-formula)

This formula manifests itself in a great many ways, using a wide range and combination of embedding and auxiliary elements. In essence, the formula presents the dilemma of not knowing what action to take. It is usually put in the form of a question and the unspecified action usually generates the word what. Its diagrammatic representation is quite simple:



Because this is an r-formula, the rhyme-word do must always fall at the end of the phrase; this means that the deep-level phrase +human do what is re-ordered at the surface level to what +human do. The following list shows some of this formula's more common surface manifestations:

- 98 Now look a-hera Sue; what you trying to do
Giving away my luggage, and trying to love me too (KELJ-7)
- 99 When I get drunk, I'm evil; I don't know what to do
If I get my good chib, can I get something good from you
(JOHE-2)
- 100 The north wind has begin howling, (and)(but) the skies are pretty
and blue
And Winter is coming; wonder what the poor people are going to do
(DAVIN-3)
- 101 Will you please tell me judge, don't have a trial till June
Because I got a working baby; let me see what my woman can do
(JONL-2)
- 102 Mmmmm baby what are you going to do
You say you love me baby, but now you say you are through
(LEDB-8)

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- 103 Lord I got a pretty mama; lives on Central Avenue
 Lord if that woman left and quit me *now*; what in the world
that I would do (DAYW-1)
- 104 You put the puppies on my mama; you drove me crazy too
 You done made me love you; what can I do (CARRL-17)
- 105 You ought to be grateful daddy; ???
 You are three times seven; you know just what you want to do
(CLAYJ-1)
- 106 I'm waiting on you; I'm waiting on you
 I'm waiting on you baby; tell me what you going to do
(EAST-2)
- 107 Tell all you women, what you better do
 You better lay off my pigmeat, or it won't be good for you
(GLOV-2)

Note the many different embedding and auxiliary elements used here to alter the basic meaning of the formula.

Although most of the above examples occur with fairly equal frequency, there are a few manifestations which are especially common. The formula prefaced by the PN_{emb} want, where the subject of the embedding element is different from that of the formula (as opposed to example 105) occurs approximately thirty-five times:

- 108 Now pretty mama what you want me to do
I did everything in this world, trying to get along with you
(RUPO-2)

The formula prefaced by the PN_{emb} tell, meaning "to ascertain," (as opposed to example 106) occurs about ten times in the corpus:

- 109 I've got a baby that keeps me feeling blue
 He acts like the weather; I can't tell what he's going to do
(WILLX-2)

The formula prefaced by the embedding and negation elements don't care occurs about twenty times in the corpus:

- 110 Now I love you baby; don't care what you do
 But the way you doing, I swear it's coming back home to you
(MCL-5)

And the formula prefaced by the adverbial and auxiliary elements more and can occurs approximately ten times:

- 111 I done told you I loved you; what more can I do
 And you must a-want me to lay down and die for you
 (GRAN-1)

There are also several manifestations in which the unspecified action feature generates a word other than what. The majority of these examples are similar to the following underlined phrase:

- 112 You can mistreat me baby; do anything you want to do
 Some day you going to-want me, but your baby won't want you
 (JORG-1)

This manifestation occurs about fifteen times, but other non-what forms also occur:

- 113 Lord I don't know what to do baby; I can't get along with you
 Now you may treat me right babe; that's all I can do
 (SCHA-1)

- 114 Been to see the gypsy, hoodoo doctors too
 Shook their heads, and told me nothing they could do
 (SMIC-34)

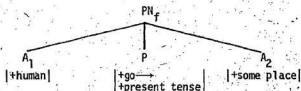
- 115 I can sit right here, and look on Jackson Avenue
 I can see everything that my good woman do
 (LEWF-17)

In all its many manifestations, this formula occurs approximately 330 times in the corpus.

human go some place (r-formula)

This formula has obvious similarities to the go some place x-formula discussed above, but there are many more limitations upon it. Because the argument some place is highly variable, it cannot fill the final position in the phrase; the word go or goes must maintain this position for the purposes of rhyme. The surface syntax of the formula therefore

becomes some place +human go. The verb go is highly restricted in the tense it can take, since the conjugations went, gone, and going would destroy the rhyme of the formula. The deep-level structure of the formula may be represented by the following diagram:



One peculiarity of this formula has previously been discussed in Chapter XV, p. 344. It often includes a part of its linked x-formula within its structure, acting like a locative adverbial element, as in the following example:

- 116 Well it's hard times here, and it's hard times everywhere I go
 I've got to make me some money, so I won't have these hard-luck
 blues no more (GILL-17)

But the formula also occurs as an independent phrase within the line:

- 117 Skin man's hollering; passing right by my door
 Well he's hollering skin, everywhere he goes (BROWL-4)

The some place slot is almost always filled by some unspecified location, such as everywhere, nowhere, any place, anywhere, no matter where, which a-way, or no place. In one of its more common forms, the formula is prefaced by the embedding and negation elements don't care, as in this example:

- 118 Because tricks ain't working, tricks ain't working no more
 And I can't make no money; don't care where I go (BOGL-11)

This particular form occurs nine times in the corpus.

In another manifestation, the formula is embedded in the A_2 argument of a +human have something construction, forming +human have some place

+human go. The two humans must be synonymous, and the entire phrase usually includes a negation element:

- 119 I woke up this morning; I couldn't even get out my door
Said this wild water got me covered, and I ain't got no place
to go (ARNK-23)

This manifestation forms the single largest group within this formula with thirty-four occurrences in the corpus.

There are only nine examples in the corpus of the some place slot being filled by a specific place: down the road (twice), out my door, Riley Springs, to you (i.e., to the place where you are), hell, Front Street, the valley, and the Union Stockyards.

In all, there are approximately 130 examples of this formula in the corpus.

+human gone (r-formula)

The internal structure of this formula is very simple. The single argument is +human and the predicate is the verb go; however this predicate has the further limiting feature that the verb must be in past participle form: be gone, have gone, have been gone, had been gone, done gone, and so on. Diagrammatically, it looks like this:



In its simplest form, the predicate is usually some conjugation of be gone:

- 120 I woke up this morning; my good gal was gone
 Stood by my bedside, and I hung my head, and I hung my head
 and moaned (BAKM-2)
- 121 Lord it's some of these old mornings; Lordy know it won't be long
 Lord I know you going to call me, Baby Lord and I'll be gone
 (B16B-14)
- 122 I treated her wrong, before she left my home
 I guess I'm not her daddy, and she would not have been gone
 (BARE-9)

Because this structure is so simple, the formula often needs embellishment, in a manner similar to that of the x-formula human cry.

The most common PN_{emb} attachment is the verb find:

123. And I got up this morning; a light all in my room
 And I looked behind me, and I found my faro gone (RACH-1)

This formula is also similar to the human cry formula in its ability to incorporate other phrases into its structure; that is, the actual formulaic phrase human gone is often prefaced by another action which describes, in greater detail, the method or reason behind the human's leaving. Thus, the following examples occur:

- 124 Now if anybody ask you who composed this song
 Tell them it's corn-liquor daddy; he's been here and gone
 (BLAAL-3)
- 125 Boy I may be right Lord; boy I may be wrong
 But my faro done come here baby; caught the train and gone
 (WELD-5)
- 126 I can't stay away; I done cried the whole night long
 The good woman I love, she done packed her trunk and gone
 (JEFB-10)
- 127 I don't mind being in jail, but I got to stay there so long so
 long
When every friend I had is done shook hands and gone
 (SMIB-3)
- 128 Love is like water; it turns off and on
 When you think you got a good girl, Lord she done turn off and gone
 (DAYI-1)

129 : Said my love's like water; it turns off and on
 When you think I'm loving, I done took off and gone
 (THPE-3)

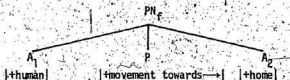
130 Children's in the pulpit, mama trying to learn the Psalms
Now that lowdown dirty deacon done stole my gal and gone
 (JORK-2)

The frequency of the above phrases is as follows: example 124, fourteen times; example 125, seven times; example 126, three times, example 127, two times; example 128, five times; example 129, one time (although this seems to have some connection with example 128); and example 130, eleven times.

In all, there are approximately two hundred examples of this formula in the corpus under analysis.

+human come home (r-formula)

In this formula, the two arguments are fairly fixed, +human and home, while the predicate may generate any word or phrase which means "movement towards." Its diagram looks like this:



The predicate is often modified by the adverb back, and the following examples show some of the different predicate manifestations:

131 I believe I believe I'll go back home
 Lord acknowledge to my good gal mama, Lord that I have done you
 wrong (ARNK-5)

- 132 One day ???; we're riding along.
I asked her how about it, and she walked back home (BARE-6)
- 133 If you see my baby, tell her to hurry home
Ain't had no mmm, since she has been gone (CARRL-17)
- 134 Now I'm going down South, and I'll stay until Winter is gone
Time that Winter-time is gone, I might come back home (ESTE-11)
- 135 Crying Lord I wonder, will I ever get back home (JOHTO-1)
- 136 You may miss my love and kisses, and you wish you back home
But someone else will be picking up your chicken bones (JONM-11)
- 137 Babe please forgive me; I know that I done you wrong
I'm going to get down on my knees; I want my little old baby back home (KELJ-4)
- 138 Says I ain't going to give you no more money; ain't going to
let you do me wrong
For you would take my money; then you will slip on home (ROLN-5)
- 139 When I left town this morning, I was on my way back home
I heard the churchbells making a lonesome sound (VINC-11)
- 140 I believe to my soul, my girl got a black cat bone
For when I leave, sure come creeping home (WALKB-1)

Together, these examples occur about seventy-five times in the corpus, and make up the majority of examples of this formula. The verbs come and go are the most frequent, but the above examples show that the singer has considerable choice in filling the predicate slot.

The other major group of phrases in this formula embed the formulaic predication within the A₂ argument of another phrase:

- 141 You know I love her Santa Claus; why don't you bring her home
If you bring her back to me, I'll never do her wrong (TURNB-2)
- 142 Way down in Boogie Alley, ain't nothing but skulls and bones
And when I get drunk, who's going to take me home (BOGL-22)

At the semantic level, the verb be is only a signal for the equative predication. At the syntactic level, however, the verb must be expressed, complete with tense and modal modification. In the case of this formula, almost all examples place the verb in the future tense. In addition, the word time is almost always pronominalized to it. The following example is typical of most manifestations of this formula:

146. Tell my dad, I'm going to leave my home
Now I'm going I'm going, and it won't be long. (RAIN-25)

There are only two examples in the corpus in which the word time is not pronominalized:

147. My windows begin rattling, and my door knob is turning around
and around
My lover's ghost has got me, and I know my time won't be long
(JOHL-29)

148. Well I'm going away; swear the time ain't long
If you don't believe I'm leaving daddy, count them days I'm gone
(JOHL-1)

In example 147, the pronoun it cannot replace the word time, because of the qualifying word my. In fact, the sense of example 147 is quite different from that of the other examples of this formula, and it is debatable whether this should be included in this formula group at all. In example 148, however, the singer has definitely chosen the nominal form over the pronominal form in the A_i argument:

There are only four other atypical manifestations:

149. So bye bye baby, if you call it gone
I know it's going to worry me, but it won't last long. (CHATP-14)
150. I'll sing you these verses, and it didn't take long
if you want to hear any more, you'll have to buy this song
(JACK-5)
151. Folks I'm going to tell you about a brand new song
I'm going to beat some dirt, and it won't take long
(JAXF-1)

143 Well wonder where's that black snake gone
Lord that black snake mama done run my darling home
 (JEFB-11)

144 Well I went out mama, and I begin to prayer and moan
 I want to be good Lord Lord; send my babe back home
 (HILSY-2)

145 If you see my wild cow, please drive her back home.
 Lord I ain't had no milk and butter, since he stole my wild cow
 and gone (WILLJ-11)

All these underlined phrases may be paraphrased as +human cause +human move toward home. The deep-structure predicate, cause generates the surface predicates in the above phrases. There are twenty occurrences of this manifestation.

Every example of this formula falls into one or the other of these two major manifestations, so that, in all, there are nearly one hundred examples of this formula in the corpus.

time won't be long (r-formula)

This is the most invariable of the twenty most frequent formulas. Its structure is an equative predication, where one argument is equated with another. In addition, there is a mandatory negation element, since the phrase time will be long does not seem entirely grammatical and it never occurs in the corpus. Equative predications are generally shown as two equative arguments without a predicate:



152 All last night, baby it seemed so long
 All I've done, I ain't done nothing wrong

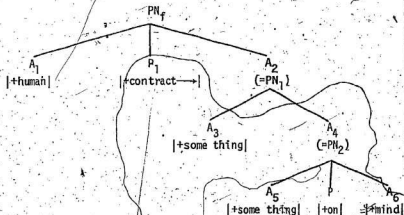
(BLACK-2)

In examples 149 to 151, the predicate generates verbs other than be; whether this should eliminate these phrases from this formula group is problematical. In example 152, there is no negation, which is probably made possible by the insertion of the verb seem in the predicate. Again, it is debatable whether this example should be considered a part of the formula.

In all, there are over fifty examples of this formula in the corpus.

+human have some thing on +human's mind

The structure of this formula is somewhat complex, in that it involves embedded predication within embedded predication. The A_1 argument is +human and its predicate is similar to that of the +human have the blues formulas; that is, it may be described as "to contract or come down with, as with a cold." The A_2 argument is an embedded equative predication with two arguments: some thing and a further embedded predication. This final predication also has some thing as its first argument, the preposition on as its predicate, and the rhyme-word mind as its second argument. In diagram form, this complex formulaic predication looks like this:



The some thing under A_3 must be synonymous with the some thing under A_5 . In addition, the A_6 argument must be qualified by a possessive which is synonymous with the A_1 argument. Otherwise, incongruous statements such as I got something on your mind would occur.

A paraphrase of this deep structure would be something like +human has something which is the something on +human's mind. Obviously, certain deletion transformations must take place; namely the A_3 argument is deleted, since the two some things are redundant in the surface structure. The final form of the formula appears as in this example:

153 I'm kind of worried; got something on my mind
That's why I drink my whiskey; make my faro wait behind.
(HICR-9)

There are, however, other deletions which can be made from the deep structure, forming different surface manifestations. The A_1 argument and the P_1 predicate may be deleted, as well as the A_5 argument of the PN_2 embedded predication. What is left becomes an equative manifestation of the formula, as in this example:

- 154 Early one morning, baby something was on my mind
 I thinking about my welfare, and I just couldn't keep from crying
 (WILK-11)

Note that when the equative predication (PN_1) becomes the surface structure, the verb be must fill the empty predicate slot.

It is also possible, however, to delete everything but the most deeply embedded predication (PN_2) some thing on mind, as in the following example:

- 155 I woke up this morning; thousand things on my mind
 Lord I thought about my troubles; could not keep from crying
 (SYKR-7)

In a similar manifestation, the A_1 and P_1 elements are not so much deleted as transformed into the preposition with in the surface structure:

- 156 Got up this morning, with the same thing on my mind
 And the girl I'm loving, but she don't pay me no mind
 (BIGB-4)

One of the most common forms of this formula transforms the statement into a question. Invariably, the some thing slot is filled by the word what, as these two examples demonstrate:

- 157 Now tell me daddy, what you got on your worried mind
 Tell your little mama your troubles; swear I'll tell you mine
 (MOOR-3)
- 158 Sweet mama sweet mama what's on your mind
 Say you can't quit me; no need of trying
 (HOWE-1)

In all the above examples, the some thing slot has been filled by a non-specific, abstract word: something, thing, and what. The slot can also be filled by concrete words and phrases, both human and -human. The human on my mind manifestations make up a whole sub-group in themselves, as demonstrated by these examples:

- 159 I can hear my back door slamming; (seem like) I can hear my
 little baby crying
 Lord I wonder baby, have you got me on your mind (DAVIN-21)

- 160 I'm so blue baby, I'm so blue baby; I can't sleep for drinking;
hardly talk for crying
You know baby, you know baby you are always forever on my mind
(CHATL-3)

- 161 I can't sleep for dreaming; I can't eat for crying
I lay down last night with that gal all on my mind
(COLLS-4)

The third major group consists of phrases which have concrete, -human words and phrases in their some thing slots:

- 162 ~~Mmmmm~~ corn liquor on my mind
If you catch me out drinking, I'm not drinking just to keep
from crying
(BLAAL-3)
- 163 The clothes look lonesome hanging out on the line
You can tell by that I've got rambling on my mind (BRADT-3)
- 164 I woke up this morning moaning with the worried blues on my mind
I was thinking about someone, who were left behind
(DAYT-1)

Where the -human some thing is a gerund, as in example 163, a further syntactical transformation is possible, which converts the A_2 argument into a noun qualified by an adjective:

- 165 I got a rambling woman; she got a rambling mind
I buy her a ticket; let her ease on down the line (NOBL-1)

The three major categories within this formula, then, are dependent upon the nature of the some thing features: non-specific, specific but -human, and +human. These three categories occur approximately forty times each for a total of about 120 examples in the corpus.

+human treat +human right (r-formula)

Structurally, this formula is the same as its x-position counterpart described on page 538. Because it is an r-formula, however, there are more restrictions upon it. Instead of the A_4 argument being some manner,

it is more specifically the word right, since this word carries the rhyme. Because of the rhyme factor, the word right must always remain at the end of the line. Thus, although the phrases you mistreat me and you don't treat me right are synonymous, only the latter one is a part of this formula.

This formula may take a number of embedding elements and adverbial elements, as the following examples illustrate:

- 166 Now when I was a schoolboy, I would not take no one's advice
Now I'm just a broke man; nobody seems to want to treat me right
(ARNK-82)
- 167 I often tell my honey, don't have to fight
The gal that gets you has got to try to treat you right
(BUTLS-2)
- 168 Walk with my good girl in the daytime; walk with her at night
Said I taught my kitchen *teller* how to treat a good man right
(CALI-2)

Although the predicate usually generates the verb treat (approximately thirty-five times in the corpus), it may also generate at least two other verbs, do and serve:

- 169 'Now you know 'Berta you ain't doing me right
And when you come home, we'll go to fuss and fight
(McCL-12)
- 170 Baby you been gone all day, that you may make whoopee all night
If I going to take my razor and cut your late hours, you wouldn't think I be serving you right
(HILK-1)

These other manifestations occur seven and two times, respectively. Overall, this formula occurs about forty-five times in the corpus under analysis.

APPENDIX B THE x-FORMULA, +HUMAN WAKE UP

As discussed previously (pp. 409-10), this formula is symbolic of an "awakening" to a change in state or situation. Its denotation, however, is "+human emerge from sleep," and it may be represented by the following diagram:



Some examples tend more towards the denotation, such as couplet 46 below, in which the sleep is induced by the dentist's gas, while others are clearly symbolic, such as example 260, in which the "waking up" is figurative. In a few cases, such as example 258, it is not clear whether the feature "emergence from sleep" is being employed at all, and therefore the inclusion of this phrase in the list may not be justified.

The vast majority of cases, however, unquestionably fulfill the criteria of the generalized predication. The predicate allows four possible manifestations: wake up, as in example 205, get up as in example 193, rise, as in example 181, and the equative verb be, as in example 125. The first two predicate manifestations are highly frequent, with approximately 200 examples of wake up and about one hundred instances of get up. The verb rise occurs only three times in the corpus (examples 1, 157, and 181) and the equative form occurs only twice (examples 125 and 214). Indeed, the equative predicates may fall outside the semantic criteria of this formula, since they do not imply "emergence from sleep" as much as "the state of being fully awake."

The temporal adverbial element in the morning or this morning almost always accompanies this formula, although it must not be thought of as an essential part of the structure of the formula. Not only does this same extraformulaic element occur with other formulas, but this formula often occurs without verbal modification; for example, see couplets 91, 110, 128, and 164. In addition, the predicate to this formula may be modified by a number of other adverbial elements: in my stockings, example 62; moaning, example 68; with the blues, examples 89 and 157; lonesome, example 266; and weak and dizzy, example 46.

There are four examples (29, 50, 159, and 218) in which the verb wake is transitive rather than intransitive, and consequently the semantic deep-structure of these phrases has two arguments: +human wake up +human. This indicates that the true deep structure of this formula may indeed have two arguments, and that, in most cases, the second argument is synonymous with the first: +human₁ wake up +human₁. In the surface structure this can be represented by the use of the reflexive pronoun, as in I woke up myself, but there are no examples of the reflexive being used with this formula in the corpus under analysis. In every case, this hypothetical reflexive has been deleted in a syntactical transformation.

There are two examples of lay awake included in this list (106 and 119), which show another x-position usage of the "wake" image, but they are clearly not members of this formula.

- 1 And I rolled and I tumbled, and I cried the whole night long
And I rose this morning, and I didn't know right from wrong
(AKER-3)
- 2 Have you ever woke up, and found your dough-roller gone
Then you wring your hands, and you cry the whole day long
(AKER-3)

- 3 She will get up early in the morning, just a while before day
Then cook your breakfast; man rush you away (ALET-8)
- 4 I'm going to get up in the morning; do like-buddy Brown
I'm going to eat my breakfast, man and lay back down (ALET-12)
- 5 Did you ever wake up between midnight and day
And you felt for your rider; she done eased away (AMOS-1)
- 6 I woke up this morning, about half past four
Told my girl, I couldn't use her no more (ANDE-1)
- 7 Baby baby baby I got all my clothes out on pawn
I'm going to wake up one morning, and have all my glad-rags gone
(ANDEJ-1)
- 8 Says I woke up this morning, and I looked outdoors
Says I know my mamlish milk cow pretty mama, Lord by the way
she lows (ARNK-2)
- 9 Lord I woke up this morning with my Port China tickets in my hand
Lord if you can't send me no woman, please send me some sissy man
(ARNK-5)
- 10 Now if you wake up in the morning; ain't got nothing on your mind
Play that old country number that you call three sixty-nine
(ARNK-14)
- 11 I woke up this morning; I couldn't even get out of my door
Said this wild water got me covered, and I ain't got no place
to go (ARNK-23)
- 12 Now I'm going to get up in the morning; do just like old buddy
Brown
Says I'm going to eat my breakfast, please and lay back down
(ARNK-29)
- 13 Well I dreamed last night now that my old shack was falling down
And when I woke up this morning, my poor head was going round
and round (ARNK-32)
- 14 I'm getting so tired of running from town to town
For when I wake up in the morning, my head is going around and
around (ARNK-35)
- 15 I'm scared to stay here; scared to leave this old bad-luck town
So when I wake up every morning, my head is going round and
round (ARNK-38)
- 16 I woke up this morning; my good gal was gone
Stood by my bedside, and I hung my head and, hung my head and
moaned (BAKW-2)

- 17 She got up last night; she crawled around my bed
Going to love you long time daddy; I guess I will see you dead
(BAKW-3)
- 18 She got up last night; she crawled around my bed
Going love you long time daddy; guess I will see you dead
(BAKW-7)
- 19 Well I woke up this morning, half past four
A long tall gal rapping at my door (BAKW-8)
- 20 Have you ever waked up babe between midnight and day
Turn over and grab the pillow where your great gal used to lay
(BARN-2)
- 21 I wake up this morning; blues all around my bed
Well I had a high fever going up to my head (BARN-2)
- 22 And I got up this morning, just about the dawn of day
Mean I ain't got no job; I ain't got no place to stay
(BIGB-2)
- 23 Got up this morning with the same thing on my mind
And the girl I'm loving, but she don't pay me no mind
(BIGB-4)
- 24 Got up this morning, about half past four
Somebody's knocking on my back door (BIGB-5)
- 25 I got up this morning, mama about half past four
Somebody was knocking on my back door (BIGB-7)
- 26 I got up this morning; hear the train whistle blow
Lord I thought about my baby; I sure did want to go
(BIGB-11)
- 27 Lord I got up this morning, just about the break of day
Lord I'm thinking about my baby; Lord the one that went away
(BIGB-14)
- 28 Now you can put me in the alley; my gal's name is Sally
You wake me up in the morning; mama I still got that old habit
(BIGB-14)
- 29 Now I wake up in the morning, holding a bottle tight
When I lay down at night, mama just a gallon out of sight
(BIGB-19)
- 30 I woke up this morning with rambling on my mind
And I lit out to walking just to pass away the time
(BLACK-5)

- 31 I woke up this morning; worried in my mind
Thinking about that girl I left behind (BLAK-4)
- 32 I got up this morning; put on my walking shoes
I'm going back to Tampa, just to kill my lowdown blues (BEAK-6)
- 33 Take me; mama I'll tell you what I'll do
I'll get up every morning; work hard all day for you (BLAK-9)
- 34 It must be a black cat bone; jomo can't work that hard
Every time I wake up, Jim Tampa's in my yard (BOGL-3)
- 35 I boogie all night; all the night before
When I woke up this morning, I want to boogie some more (BOGL-9)
- 36 I got up this morning with the rising sun
Been working all day, and I ain't caught a one (BOGL-11)
- 37 I got up this morning, feeling tough
I've got to call in my tricks in the rough rough rough (BOGL-11)
- 38 Got up this morning by the rising sun
Didn't have no whiskey; I tried to buy me some (BOGL-13)
- 39 He gets up every morning, and before he goes
Say he don't want me to put my head out of my front door (BOGL-16)
- 40 Woke up this morning; mama was treating me night and day
I reached for my sugar, and the fool had stole away. (BRAC-7)
- 41 Woke up this morning with my face up to the ground
I didn't have no sugar, not to pick up in my arms (BRAC-7)
- 42 I woke up this morning; had the blues all around my bed
I couldn't help but to think about what my good gal said (BRAC-9)
- 43 Woke up this morning; couldn't even walk in my shoes
My baby just quit me; she left me with the bust up blues- (BRAC-10)
- 44 Have you woke up in the morning; *you weep and moan*
Your best girl quit you; left you all alone (BRAC-11)
- 45 Lord when I got up this morning, snow was on my window pane
I couldn't even see my baby; couldn't even hear her name (BRADT-5)

31. I woke up this morning; worried in my mind
Thinking about that girl I left behind (BLAK-4)
32. I got up this morning; put on my walking shoes
I'm going back to Tampa, just to kill my lowdown blues (BLAK-6)
33. Take me; mama I'll tell you what I'll do
I'll get up every morning; work hard all day for you (BLAK-9)
34. It must be a black cat bone; jomo can't work that hard
Everytime I wake up, Jim Tampa's in my yard (BOGL-3)
35. I boogie all night; all the night before
When I woke up this morning, I want to boogie some more (BOGL-9)
36. I got up this morning with the rising sun
Been working all day, and I ain't caught a one (BOGL-11)
37. I got up this morning, feeling tough
I've got to call in my tricks in the rough rough rough (BOGL-11)
38. Got up this morning by the rising sun
Didn't have no whiskey; I tried to buy me some (BOGL-13)
39. He gets up every morning, and before he goes
Say he don't me to put my head out of my front door (BOGL-16)
40. Woke up this morning; mama was treating me night and day,
I reached for my sugar, and the fool had stole away (BRAC-7)
41. Woke up this morning with my face up to the ground
I didn't have no suger, not to pick up in my arms (BRAC-7)
42. I woke up this morning; had the blues all around my bed
I couldn't help but to think about what my good gal said (BRAC-9)
43. Woke up this morning; couldn't even walk in my shoes
My baby just quit me; she left me with the bust up blues (BRAC-10)
44. Have you woke up in the morning; *you weep and man*
Your best girl quit you; left you all alone (BRAC-11)
45. Lord when I got up this morning, snow was on my window pane
I couldn't even see my baby; couldn't even hear her name (BRADT-5)

- 46 I woke up weak and dizzy; he told me that I would
But all my pain had left me; he really done me good
(BRYL-2)
- 47 Now I woke up this morning mama; blues all around my bed
Thinking about the kind words that my mama had said
(BUTLS-2)
- 48 I woke up this morning; blues all around my bed
Thinking about that wire that my brown had sent (BUTLS-3)
- 49 I don't want no woman that wears a number nine
I wake up in the morning; I can't tell her shoes from mine
(CAMC-1)
- 50 Woke up my baby; come my love
Unlock the door; the sky's above (GARRL-2)
- 51 Now I woke up this morning; my woman was standing over me
She had a big forty-five, and she was mad as she could be
(CARRL-21)
- 52 When she gets up in the morning; she starts to drink her corn
Everytime I think of that woman, I wished I had never been born
(CARRL-23)
- 53 I woke up this morning; didn't find you there
Wondering what man had his hand running down through your hair
down there (CARRL-35)
- 54 Says I woke up this morning, half past four
I want to roll your lemon baby, just before I go (CHATB-9)
- 55 She shook me this morning at half past one
Oh wake up daddy; rolling must go on (CHATB-13)
- 56 She shook me again at half past two
Oh wake up daddy; rolling ain't near through (CHATB-13)
- 57 And I woke up this morning; my pillow slip wringing wet
I looked around for my baby; daddy I can't use you yet
(COLEK-2)
- 58 I'm so worried; don't know what to do
I waked up this morning, mama feeling sad and blue (COLFJ-1)
- 59 I woke up Lord this morning; things are worrying on a poor me
(COLFJ-6)
- 60 When you get up in the morning, when the ding-dong rings
You make it to the station; see the same old thing
(COLLS-7)

61. I got up this morning; looked at the rising sun
Can't nobody run me like them bloodhounds, done (COLLS-14)
62. I got up in my stockings; tipped across the floor
Scared the bloodhounds are rapping upon my door (COLLS-14)
63. I got up this morning, just about the break of day
I could hear *a bunch of* bloodhounds a-coming down my way
(COLLS-14)
64. I got up this morning; fell down across my bed
I could hear something pushing all around my head (COLLS-14)
65. My woman woke up this morning; dollar in her hand
Two bits for the monkey; six bits for her man (COOKR-1)
66. Mama I woke up this morning; mama had the sundown blues
And my fair brown told me, I refuse to go (DADD-1)
67. Woke up this morning, and I was half most dead
I was bone-down weary, a low and ache aching head (DARB-1)
68. I woke up this morning moaning with the worried blues on my mind
I was thinking about someone who were left behind (DAYT-1)
69. You got to get up early in the morning; fix your lunch
And get out early with that scuffling bunch (DORST-14)
70. If I wake up at night and wants to eat
It's up to you to get me some of that western meat
(DORST-14)
71. Get up every morning at half past three
Ease out to your job without disturbing me (EDWJ-1)
72. How you get up every morning at half past three
Bring the coal and kindling; make a fire for me (EDWS-1)
73. Now I got up this morning; couldn't make no time
I didn't have no blues; messed all up in mind (ESTE-7)
74. Get up in the morning; grey towel around your head
Ask her to cook your breakfast, but she never did (ESTE-7)
75. Now I got up this morning; blues all around my bed
I turned back to my *chivver*; blues all in my bed
(ESTE-10)
76. Now I get up every morning, and I walk to Third and Field,
And I'm just standing and I'm wondering Lord just how to make
a meal (ESTE-11)

- 77 Now I'm going to get up in the morning, and I'm going to do like
buddy Brown
Know I'm going to eat my breakfast; I believe I'll lay back down
(ESTE-14)
- 78 Now woke up this morning; couldn't hardly see
Snow on the ground about eight foot deep (ESTE-29)
- 79 I washed my clothes; I hanged them by the fire
Get up in the morning; they be finally dry (ESTE-31)
- 80 I woke up this morning about half past four
Somebody knocking on my back door (FULB-1)
- 81 When I called this morning, about half past one
Wake up baby; loving has just begun (FULB-12)
- 82 Says I told my baby, about half past two
Wake up mama; loving ain't half through (FULB-12)
- 83 Then I called her this morning about half past ten
Wake up mama; loving is just began (FULB-12)
- 84 Did you ever wake up in the morning, and find your rider gone
I know just how it feels; that's why I composed this song
(GIBC-11)
- 85 Wake up baby; please don't be so still
Unless you fixing a good way to get your daddy killed
(GIBC-16)
- 86 Says I woke up this morning, feeling so bad
Thinking about the good times that I once have had
(GILL-4)
- 87 I woke up this morning, Lord and my baby was gone
I didn't have no sweet woman just to hold me in her arms
(GILL-6)
- 88 Had a strange feeling this morning; I swear I've had it all day
I'll wake up one of these mornings; that feeling will be here to stay
(HANN-1)
- 89 Did you ever wake up with the blues, and didn't have no place to go
And you couldn't do nothing-but just walk from door to door
(HARW-1)
- 90 Got up this morning and I could not keep from crying
Thinking about my rider; she done put me down (HARW-1)
- 91 Have you ever woke up with them bull frogs on your mind
(HARW-2)

- 92 When I woke up this morning, folks I just started to scream
Why when I came to find out that it was just a lonesome
midnight dream (HARX-1)
- 93 I woke up this morning, feeling sad and blue
Couldn't find my yo yo; didn't know what to do (HARZ-1)
- 94 You going to wake up one of these mornings, mama baby and I'll
be gone
And you may not never mama see me in your town no more
(HAWK-5)
- 95 When I wake up in the morning, my heart it feels like lead
When I go to bed at midnight, sometimes I wish I was dead
(HENDB-1)
- 96 Now woke up this morning, my gal had the worried blues
I looked over in the corner; my poor grandma *what* had them too
(HENRH-1)
- 97 Woke up this morning, twixt midnight and day
With my hand around my pillow where my brownie used to lay
(HICR-1)
- 98 Woke up this morning; my clock was striking four
Someone started knocking, knocking on my dear (HICR-11)
- 99 Did you ever wake up in the morning baby; same thing all on your
mind
Something keep you bothered mama; honey worried all the time
(HILSY-1)
- 100 I wrung my hands and I wanted to scream
But when I woke up, I found it was only a dream (HITE-1)
- 101 Well I woke up this morning, half past four
Met a big crowd at the ??? store (HOLLT-1)
- 102 Well I woke up this morning, half past two
Streets was crowded and I couldn't get through (HOLLT-1)
- 103 Woke up this morning, about five o'clock
Get me some eggs and a nice pork chop (HOWE-1)
- 104 I woke up this morning between midnight and day
I felt for my rider; she done walked away (HOWE-2)
- 105 I woke up this morning ('tween midnight and day)(just before day)
I looked at the pillow, where my good gal used to lay
(HOWE-4)
- 106 I walked the streets all day; hung my head and cried
I laid awake all night, trying to make myself satisfied
(JACKC-13)

- 107 I get up early in the morning, sweet mama and I comb and curry
my horse
Because I don't want nobody not to *see my pause*(JACKC-23)
- 108 Ah wake up mama; wake up and don't sleep so sound
Give me what you promised me, before you lay down(JAMJ-1)
- 109 I woke up this morning; looked at the special rising sun
I prayed to the Lord, my special rider would come(JAMS-5)
- 110 I wring my hands, baby and I want to scream
And I woke up; I found it was all a dream (JAMS-6)
- 111 I got up this morning; the blues all around my bed
Went in the eat my breakfast, and the blues all in my bread
(JEFB-1)
- 112 I got up this morning; my sure-enough on my mind
I had to raise a conversation with the landlady, to keep from crying
(JEFB-3)
- 113 I got up this morning, rambling for my shoes
The little woman sung me a song of her worried blues
(JEFB-4)
- 114* Well I got up this morning with my (sure-enough)(same thing) on
my mind
The woman I love; she keeps a good man worried all the time
(JEFB-21)
- 115 I woke up this morning; took a walk till the break of day
I asked for a woman to marry me, and I just made my get-away
(JEFB-35)
- 116 I woke up this morning; woke up about half past ten
Ease my head in the window; she's singing Lemon's worried blues
again (JEFB-35)
- 117 I got up this morning; sure was feeling fine
I heard a rap at my door; must be that bad-cat woman of mine
(JEFB-37)
- 118 I got up this morning; I was easing across this floor
Now my bad cat's leaving me; ain't going to catch my mice no more
(JEFB-37)
- 119 Lay awake at night, and just can't eat a bite
~~Used to be my rider~~, but she just won't treat me right.
(JEFB-39)
- 120 Oh better find my mama soon
I woke up this morning; black snake was making *easy rukus* in
my room (JEFB-58)

- 121 Black snake is evil; black snake is all I see
I woke up this morning; black snake was moving in on me
 (JEFB-58)
- 122 I wake up every morning with the rising sun
Oh thinking about my honeydripper, and all the wrongs he done
 (JOHE-4)
- 123 I woke up this morning with the blues all around my bed
I felt just like somebody in my family was dead
 (JOHL-2)
- 124 I woke up this morning; couldn't even get out my door
I was snowbound in my cabin; had water seeping up through my floor
 (JOHL-30)
- 125 We're up before sunrise, slaving sixteen hours a day
We pay our house rent and grocery bills, and the pimps get the rest of our pay
 (JOHL-32)
- 126 I woke up this morning; blues all around my bed
I never had no good man, I mean to ease my aching head
 (JOHL-1)
- 127 Lord I woke up this morning; blues all around my bed
I never had no good man, I mean to ease my worried head
 (JOHL-2)
- 128 I'm going to wake up between midnight and day
You going to ??? *my need* baby, and I swear I'll be gone away
 (JOHL-4)
- 129 I'm going to get up in the morning; I believe I'll dust my broom
Because then the black man you been loving, girl friend can get my room
 (JOHR-3)
- 130 I woke up this morning, and all my shrimps was dead and gone
I was thinking about you baby; will you hear my weep and moan
 (JOHR-13)
- 131 I woke up this morning, feeling around for my shoes
Know by that, I got these old walking blues
 (JOHR-15)
- 132 Lord I feel like blowing my poor lonesome horn
Got up this morning; my little Bernice was gone
 (JOHR-15)
- 133 Lord I feel like blowing my lonesome horn
Well I got up this morning; all I had was gone
 (JOHR-15)
- 134 I got up this morning; the blues walking like a man
Worried blues, give me your right hand
 (JOHR-17)
- 135 I got up this morning; the blues walking like a man
Worried blues, give me your right hand
 (JOHR-18)

- 136 And I rolled and I tumbled, and I cried the whole night long
When I woke up this morning, my biscuit-roller's gone (JOHR-19)
- 137 I woke up this morning with canned heat on my mind (JOHTO-5)
- 138 I woked up up this morning; crying canned heat around my bed
 Run here somebody; take these canned heat blues (JOHTO-5)
- 139 I woke up this morning; said my morning prayers (JOHTO-6)
- 140 I woke up this morning; said my morning prayers
 I ain't got no woman to speak in my behalf (JOHTO-7)
- 141 Lord I woke up this morning; blues all around my bed
 Had the blues so bad mama, till I couldn't raise up my head (JOHTO-9)
- 142 Woke up this morning; blues all around my bed
 I didn't have my daddy to hold my aching head (JONAN-1)
- 143 Won't you tell me baby, who can your good man be
I woke up this morning baby, with a hex all over me (JORC-10)
- 144 Lord my girl got something, sure Lord worries me
I woke up soon this morning; had that thing all over me (JORC-11)
- 145 Woke up this morning; *to stab* me with the worried blues
 Now *must of* peep over in the corner; poor grandmammy had them too (JORL-1)
- 146 Woke up this morning; the family had the weary blues
 Poked my head over in the corner; poor grandmammy had them too (JORL-2)
- 147 I woke up this morning with travelling on my mind
 Kept a feeling my pocket, and I didn't have a lousy dime (JORL-4)
- 148 Well I woke up this morning, and I feeling bad
 I thinking about the good times that I used to have (KELE-1)
- 149 Woke up this morning; look at the rising sun
 I thought about my good gal, who done gone along (KING-2)
- 150 I woke up this morning; those blues were on my mind
 I was so down-hearted, I couldn't do nothing but cry (KYLE-1)

- 151 I woke up this morning, I woke up this morning with the blues
right there around my bed
Went to eat my breakfast, and the blues all in my bread
(LEDB-7)
- 152 I got up this morning; hung all around my brown
Because she told me which a-way the Red River was a-running down
(LEDB-12)
- 153 I woke up this morning, and I looked up against the wall
Roaches and the bedbugs playing a game of ball
(LEMF-15)
- 154 When I woke up this morning, I looked down on the floor
Bedbug had been in my pocket, and pulled out all my dough
(LEMF-15)
- 155 Did you ever wake up twixt night and day
Had your arm around your pillow where your good gal used to lay
(LINC-5)
- 156 I believe to my soul, my brown's got a stingaree
When I woke up this morning; say she was stinging poor me
(LINC-5)
- 157 I rise with the blues, and I work with the blues
Nothing I can get but bad news
(LINC-6)
- 158 Sprinkle gopher-dust around your bed
Wake up some morning; find your own self dead
(LOFC-3)
- 159 Trouble wake me in the morning; put me to bed late at night
Now if I get out of trouble, going to start living right
(LUCA-4)
- 160 Now my baby got ways soon in the morning, just like a squirrel
Get up every morning, grabbing them *covers* on the world
(McCL-13)
- 161 Woke up this morning; found something wrong
My loving babe had caught that train and gone
(McCOC-2)
- 162 I got up this morning; said my morning prayers
Didn't have nobody to speak in my behalf
(McCOJ-15)
- 163 Wake up mama; don't you sleep so hard
For these old blues walking all over your yard
(McTW-3)
- 164 Wake up mama; turn your lamp down low
Have you got the nerve to drive Papa McTell from your door
(McTW-6)

- 165 We woke up this morning; we had them Statesboro blues
I looked over in the corner; grandma and grandpa had them too
(McTW-6)
- 166 Get up fellow; ride all around the world
Poor boy, you ain't got no girl
(McTW-8)
- 167 Wake up in the morning, about half past three
Think my baby done quit poor me
(McTW-9)
- 168 Wake up in the morning at half past three
Think pretty mama done fell on me
(McTW-10)
- 169 This Bell Street whiskey make you sleep all in your clothes
And when you wake up next morning, feel like you done laid
outdoors
(McTW-32)
- 170 I give you my money baby; my last dime
Soon as you got up mama, you changed your mind
(McTW-34)
- 171 I woke up this morning; got on a stroll
Met my baby; got her told
(MARTC-2)
- 172 Now I woke up this morning, doggone my soul,
My flour barrel was empty; swear I didn't have no coal
(MARTC-5)
- 173 I woke up this morning about half past five
My baby turned over; cried just like a child
(MEMM-2)
- 174 I got a Hudson Super Six; I got me *a little old* Cadillac Eight
I woke up this morning; my Cadillac standing at my back gate
(MEMM-19)
- 175 I got up this morning; I made a fire in my stove
And made up my bread, and stuck my pan outdoors
(MEMM-23)
- 176 I got up this morning; I went outdoors
I'd know my cow by the way she lows
(MEMM-24)
- 177 I got up this morning; one stung me on my leg
I can't sleep at night, because he keeps me awake
(MEMM-28)
- 178 Have you ever been drunk, and slept in all your clothes
And when you wake up, feel like you want a dose
(MILL-1)
- 179 I get up early every morning to toil the whole day through
Baby it wouldn't be so hard, if I was getting up from beside of
you
(MOOA-2)
- 180 I woke up here this morning, feeling bad
I was dreaming about sweet mama the time once I've had
(NELST-1)

- 181 And I rolled and I tumbled, and I cried the whole night long
 And I rosed this morning mama, and I didn't know right from wrong
 (NEWB-5)
- 182 Did you ever wake up, and find your dough-roller gone
 And you wring your hands, and you cry the whole day long
 (NEWB-5)
- 183 I woke up this morning, baby and feeling bad (OWEG-1)
- 184 Oh I woke up this morning, honey about the break of day
 I hugging the pillow where my fair brown did lay (OWEM-1)
- 185 Woke up this morning; get my shoes
 I love a woman that I can't give it to (OWEM-2)
- 186 Woke up this morning to get my coat
 My brown knocking on a-my back door (OWEM-2)
- 187 Woke up this morning to get my tie
 I can't get you woman, because you let me die (OWEM-2)
- 188 Woke up this morning about the break of day
 Hugging the pillow where that fair brown lay (OWEM-2)
- 189 I woke up this morning; jinx all around my bed
 Turned my face to the wall, and I didn't have a word to say
 (PATT-2)
- 190 She's (got) a long tall woman; tali like a cherry tree
 She gets up before day, and she puts that thing on me
 (PATT-6)
- 191 I lay down last night, hoping I would have my peace
 But when I woke up, Tom Rushen was shaking me (PATT-8)
- 192 I got up this morning; Tom Day was standing around
 If he lose his office now, he's running from town to town
 (PATT-8)
- 193 I got up this morning; my hat in my hand
 Didn't have no other brown, didn't have no man (PATT-9)
- 194 I got up this morning, something after five
 And the morning sun Lord was beginning to rise (PATT-14)
- 195 I got up one morning, feeling mighty bad
 And it must not have been them Belzoni jail I had (PATT-23)
- 196 Aw I wake up every morning, now with the jinx all around my bed
 I have been a good provider, but I believe I've been misled
 (PATT-27)

- 197 Wake up every morning, when everything look blue
Go see the one you love; the blues will soon leave you (PETT-3)
- 198 Have you ever woke up with whiskey-drinking on your mind
You send away to that bootlegger, and you did not have a dime (POPE-1)
- 199 I woke up this morning to make a fire in the stove
Bull frogs in the bread pan; *bacon and eggs ??? they go* (POPE-3)
- 200 I woke up this morning; couldn't even get out of my bed
I was just thinking about that black woman, and it almost killed me dead (PULL-1)
- 201 And I got up this morning; a light all in my room
And I looked behind me, and I found my faro gone (RACH-1)
- 202 Did you ever wake up, just at the break of day
With your arms around the pillow where your daddy used to lay (RAIN-3)
- 203 Woke up this morning with my head bowed down
I had that mean old feeling; I was in the wrong man's town (RAIN-8)
- 204 Woke up this morning, looking for my darn old shoes
Because mama's going home, singing the Bessemer blues (RAIN-24)
- 205 I woke up this morning; the crying blues on my mind
I done got to the place baby that I hardly know my right mind (RAME-2)
- 206 Well I got up this morning, feeling bad
Thinking about the times that I once have had (SHAW-2)
- 207 Well I woke up this morning, feeling blue
Thinking about no other one but you (SHAW-2)
- 208 When I woke up this morning, mama's feeling bad
Got to thinking about the time I once have had (SHAW-3)
- 209 Woke up this morning, when the chickens was crowing for day
Turned on the right side of my pillow; my man had gone away (SMIB-20)
- 210 I woke up this morning; can't even get out of my door
There's enough trouble to make a poor girl wonder where she want to go (SMIB-22)
- 211 I woke up this morning with an awful aching head
My new man had left me just a room and an empty bed (SMIB-27)

- 212 I had a nightmare last night, when I lay down
When I woke up this morning, my sweet man couldn't be found
 (SMIB-39)
- 213 When I woke up, my pillow was wet with tears
 Just one day from that man of mine seem like a thousand years
 (SMIB-39)
- 214 He eats his supper; throws his clothes on the floor
And he's up every morning at half past four (SMIC-36)
- 215 Last night you called me a lowdown dirty name
Woke up Monday morning and done the same old thing
 (SMIJ-16)
- 216 I woke up this morning; clock was striking four
 And my baby told me, pack your things and go (SPAN-2)
- 217 Say my bed (seem lonely)(is lonesome); my pillow now it sure do
I wake up out of the midnight; I really have those milk cow blues
 (SPRU-1)
- 218 My baby woke me up this morning; she told me she's Joliet bound
 She want to find Four-A Highway; that's the main highway out of
 town (SPRU-6)
- 219 Woke up early this morning; blues around my bed
 And the ??? running everywhere (STEV-1)
- 220 Woke up early this morning, feeling awful low
 And the blues they had me running up the wall* (STEV-3)
- 221 Woke up early this morning; got out of my bed,
 And the blues had started climbing up the bed (STEV-5)
- 222 Woke up early this morning with the blues all around my bed
 And the blues they tell me crying man oh man (STEV-5)
- 223 Woke up early this morning; blues all around my bed
 And the blues ain't there; they easing everywhere (STEV-6)
- 224 Lord I woke up this morning with the blues all around my baby's
 bed
 I turned my face to the wall; baby these are the words I said
 (STOK-2)
- 225 Lord I got a little cabin; Lord it's number forty-four
Lord I wake up every morning; the world be scratching on my door
 (SYKR-1)
- 226 I woke up this morning, just as sick as I could be
 Now nothing but these blues almost killing poor me
 (SYKR-3)

- 227 I woke up this morning; thousand things on my mind
 Lord I thought about my troubles; could not keep from crying
 (SYKR-7)
- 228 Drink some rooster soup before going to bed
Wake up in the morning; find your own self dead (TAMP-3)
- 229 Have you ever woke up in the morning; your bed going around and
 around
 You know about that baby; you have done throwed me down
 (TEMP-4)
- 230 She sleeps late every morning; I can't hardly get her woke
She will wake up in one second, when she hears a car horn blow
 (THOR-2)
- 231 Now you will wake up in the morning and find me gone
 Because I'm a rambling man; I can't stay at one place long
 (THOR-11)
- 232 Lord I got up this morning with a rambling mind, feeling fine
Thinking about the good times I had five years ago
 And I'm leaving town this morning, and I sure don't want to go
 (THOR-13)
- 233 I woke up this morning; I had the blues three different ways
I had one mind to stay here; and two to leave this place
 (THOR-13)
- 234 Got up one of these mornings; looked down in the sea
 What see the way them fishes do the shivaree (THPE-1)
- 235 Wake up soon every morning; babe wear a rag all around her head
Every time you speak to her, she'll swear she nearly dead
 (TORE-1)
- 236 Said I woke up this morning, just about the dawn of day
 Some man had my woman, and the worried blues had me
 (TORE-2)
- 237 I woke up this morning, feeling mighty bad
I done lost my daddy; best man I ever had (TUCB-1)
- 238 Woke up this morning; woke up before day
Woke up this morning with the same thing on my mind
 (UNKA-3)
- 239 When you get up in the morning, begin to sing this lonesome song
I had a good man; he caught the train and gone (VINC-6)
- 240 I went to a country girl's house, and only one night I spent
I got up next morning and came back home; been running ever since
 (VINC-9)

- 241 I rammed my gun every morning before day
When I woke up this morning, my ramrod was gone away.
 (VINC-10)
- 242 I lay down last night; I was awful sick
I woke up this morning; she had my pocket picked (VINC-18)
- 243 She got up this morning; she looking mighty sweet
 The mens all thought she was something good to eat.
 (VINC-19)
- 244 Oh I woke up this morning; sure was feeling bad
 Don't know about the good times that I, oh that I once have
 had (VINC-2)
- 245 Said I walked from noon, honey way up North
I got up this morning, crying mama I got to go (WALKB-2)
- 246 I woke up this morning, feeling mighty sad.
 Was the worst old feeling that I ever had. (WALIM-3)
- 247 Rave you ever been drunk; slept in all of your clothes
And when you woke up, you found that you were out of dough
 (WALLS-4)
- 248 Wake up man; see how bright the sun does shine
 Get up in that section gang, and bring me up some time
 (WALLS-6)
- 249 Woke up this morning; the day was dawning, and I was feeling all
 sad and blue
 I had nobody to tell my troubles to
 I felt so worried, I didn't know what to do. (WATE-1)
- 250 Did you ever feel like you lost the best friend you had
 You wake up in the morning, and you feel so bad
 Thinking about your brownie, and your heart's so sad;
 (WATE-11)
- 251 I got up this morning about half past four
 Big Bill Johnny had his *spenders* on the floor (WEAC-1)
- 252 Got up this morning; my good gal was gone
 Stood by my bedside long many, long many morn (WEAC-2)
- 253 Said I woke up this morning; I was feeling so bad
 Thinking about the good times that I once have had
 (WELD-11)
- 254 Lord I woke up this morning, when everything was still
 Well well well I seen my little mama as she come creeping up
 the hill (WHEA-2)

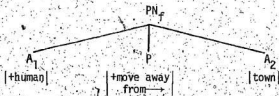
255. Well well well did you ever wake up mama, baby now between
midnight and day
Oh with your head on your pillow, babe where your good man he
once have lay (WHEA-2)
256. You got up this morning with a big rag around your head
Asked you to cook my breakfast; babe you went back to bed
(WHEA-9)
257. And I got up this morning; went down in old alleycan*
Now the women there was hollering, ood well well here
come that little old cocktail man (WHEA-12)
258. Now men when you're down, one thing you must do
When you get up, try to remember everybody that mistreated you
(WHEA-30)
259. I wake up this morning just crazy with the blues
I can't even tell you, oh well well the difference in my shoes
(WHEA-32)
260. Working on the project; my gal's spending all my dough
Now I have waked up on her, oh well well and I won't be that
weak no more (WHEA-36)
261. Going to get up in the morning, baby with the rising sun
If the train don't run, going to be some walking done
(WHIW-2)
262. I wake up every morning with leaving on my mind
Because my mama's so evil, and she treats me so unkind
(WIGG-1)
263. Now I got a little pld Chevy, Lord number is forty-four
I wake up every morning; wolves sitting in my door
(WIGG-2)
264. I woke up this morning about half past five
My baby turned over and tried to cop a jive (WIGG-3)
265. When you wake up Monday morning with the stockyard blues
Come and talk to Mr. Owens about his good-looking mules
(WILK-12)
266. Did you ever wake up lonesome, all by yourself
And the one you love off loving someone else (WILLH-2)
267. Say wake up mama; the children done come home (WILLJ-1)
268. Say wake up mama; hear your rooster crow
One at your window, one at your door (WILLJ-2)

- 269 Wake up mama; hear your rooster crow
One at your window; one at your door (WILLJ-3)
- 270 Say I woke up this morning about the break of day
I hugged the pillow where you used to lay (WILLJ-4)
- 271 Wake up mama; hear the rooster crow
One at your window; one at your door (WILLJ-4)
- 272 Little leg woman do just like a squirrel
Get up in the morning; *caught that* on the world (WILLJ-5)
- 273 I got up this morning, feeling bad
Thinking about that stuff I had (WILLJ-6)
- 274 Well well get up in the morning; catch the Highway Forty-Nine
Well well I'm going to look for little Malvina; ooo man don't
say she can't be found (WILLJ-7)
- 275 I got a long tall woman; live on Highway Forty-Nine
Well well I get up in the morning; ooo Lord boys she's down on
my mind (WILLJ-7)
- 276 (I'm going to)(If I) get up in the morning Malvina, I believe
I'll dust my bed
I'm going down Highway Forty-Nine; boys I'm going to be rocking
to my head (WILLJ-7)
- 277 Yeah I got up this morning; I was feeling awful bad
I was thinking about the good time man, mmm Lord me and my baby
once have had (WILLJ-11)
- 278 Babe I woke up this morning; I looked down the road
I think I heard my wild cow mama, when she begin to low (WILLJ-11)
- 279 I woke up this morning; I looked down the line
Couldn't hear nothing but my babe's train crying (WILLJ-13)
- 280 You done got me to the place, I hate to see that evening sun go
down -
Well when I get up in the morning, ooo well peach orchard man she's
on my mind (WILLJ-18)
- 281 Well I'm going to get up in the morning; get to Highway Forty-Nine
Well *about* my sweet woman, ooo well well she don't pay poor
Joey no mind (WILLJ-21)
- 282 (I'm going to wake up)(Well I'm going to get up) in the morning;
I believe I'll dust my bed
Going down the Highway Forty-Nine; ooo well boys I be rocking to
my head (WILLJ-21)

- 283 Now you done got me so, I hate to see that evening sun go down
I wake up in the morning; peach orchard woman on my mind
(WILLK-4)
- 284 I woke up one morning, walking across the floor
I'm going away to leave you baby; I don't mean you no good no
more
(WILLX-1)
- 285 Woke up this morning at the break of day
Looked on my pillow where my man used to lay (WILLX-3)
- 286 Woke up this morning about half past nine, and I just could not
keep from crying
I was worried about that stevedore man of mine (WILSL-2)
- 287 You ever wake up, just about the break of day
With your arms around the pillow, where Mr. so-and-so used to lay
(WILSL-3)

APPENDIX C THE r-FORMULA +HUMAN LEAVE TOWN

This formula alludes to the underlying theme of travel in the blues, although it also has overtones of abandonment and unfaithfulness. Its semantic structure is quite simple: an A_1 argument which can generate any +human word or phrase; an A_2 argument which must be the rhyme-word town; and a predicate which has the sense of "move away from." In diagram form, the formula looks like the following:



The most variable part of this formula is the predicate. In about seventy-five percent of the examples, it generates the verb leave (see examples 1, 7, 8, and so on), but it may also generate a number of other interesting and imaginative words and phrases. The most frequent of these other predicate manifestations is blow (6, 23, 46, 47, 80), while others occur only one or two times in the corpus: go away from (41); get out of (10, 12); hobo out of (50); blind it from (4); cadillaced out of (49).

In addition, this formula also seems to be able to express itself as an equative: +human be out of town (21, 29, 44, 45, 54, 61). This equative form conveys the sense of a complete action; that is, the +human has completed the movement away from town. By contrast, the other manifestations describe the +human in the process of this movement away from town.

A small group of examples exhibit the following manifestations: +human drive +human from town (30); +human run +human out of town (84);

+human take +human away from or out of town (33, 63, 77]. These all exhibit a hidden embedding element: +human cause PH. The surface-level verbs are actually more complex than they appear because of their causative qualities.

There are two examples in the corpus which may play on the theme of abandonment more than movement, and they may, in fact, not truly belong to this formula at all: +human leave +human in town (17 and 59). This phrase indirectly implies that the first +human has left town or is out of town. It is related thematically, if not structurally to this formula. Another questionable example is number 83: +human move to another town. This phrase implies that +human has left one town to go to another, but its sense of "movement towards" rather than "movement away from" probably places it beyond the boundaries of this formula.

Among the great majority of examples which have the verb leave as their predicate, there are a number of different embedding elements, although none occur more than twice in the corpus: worry about (65); try to (60); make (56); ready to (78); feel like (76); fixing to (19 and 79); watch (32); see (14 and 64); scared to (3); and mind (5).

- 1 And I told my woman, just before I left town
Don't you let nobody tear the barrelhouse down (AKER-3)
- 2 Said now I got a notion to leave this lonesome town
Says my gal she caught the Southern, and I know she done put me
down (ARNK-11)
- 3 I'm scared to stay here, scared to leave this old bad-luck town
So when I wake up every morning, my head is going round and round
(ARNK-38)
- 4 I just want to blind it from this half-good town
When she blows for the crossing, I'm going ease it on
(BELE-3)

- 5 I got a mind to ramble; mind to leave this town (BLAAL-1)
- 6 Ah the rising sun going down
I ain't got nobody, since my baby's blowed this town
(BLAK-9)
- 7 I got the bad-feeling blues; keeps me so lowdown
I'm going to pack my grip; leave this lonesome town
(BLAK-10)
- 8 Packing my duffie, going to leave this town
And I'm going to hustle to catch that train southbound
(BLAK-32)
- 9 The gals from the alley slipping all around
Telling everybody, they're leaving town (BLAK-34)
- 10 Ain't no need of sitting with my head hung down
Your black man ought to get out of town (BLAK-37)
- 11 Now I tell you mama, now I'm sure going to leave this town
Because I been in trouble ever since I set my suitcase down
(BRAC-3)
- 12 It's hard it's hard, it's hard *to get out of this* town
Get another ??? (BRAC-9)
- 13 He's got to rob and steal; don't he got to leave out of this
man's town
Know he'll say going back to the country; going to sow some
more cotton seed down (CHATB-28)
- 14 Make you lamp up higher, and turn your lamp around
Look out your back door; see me leave this town (COLLS-12)
- 15 I helped you baby, when your kinfolks turned you down
Now you loving someone else baby, and you done left this town
(DARB-1)
- 16 Please don't mistreat me, if you don't want me around
Lord don't be mad with me baby, because your good man have left
this town (DAVIW-22)
- 17 Boy I'd *better see my good gal* leave me in this town
I'd beat the train to the *crossroads*, and I'd burn the depot
down (DAYW-1)
- 18 I got my mind all made up, and I'm going to leave this town
I'm a-going so far, till the women can't run me down
(DORST-12)
- 19 Lord my eyes are sorrow; tears come a-rolling down
Now you know by that babe, fixed to leave your town
(ESTE-4)

- 20 I hate to see that evening sun go down
 Lord I got a notion, my woman done and left this town
 (FULB-10)
- 21 Now my woman please don't worry, baby while I'm out of your town
 Now the love I have for you mama, God knows it can't be turned
 around (FULB-16)
- 22 I want to see what the noise was all about
 Someone told me, your brown done left this town (HICR-11)
- 23 Take me, mama; please don't throw me down
 I'm going to pack my suitcase; I'm going to blow this town
 (HOWE-4)
- 24 I'm Alabama bound; I'm Alabama bound
 Then if you want me to love you babe, you got to leave this town
 (JACKC-10)
- 25 I'm leaving today; going to leave this southern town
 Because my baby caught a plane that was up the way bound
 (JACKC-19)
- 26 Let's get our gauge up papa; let our love come down
 Get leaping drunk, and leave this lowdown town (HENDB-2)
- 27 If you quit me daddy, I'm going to leave this town
 Can't get my gauge up, and let my love come down (HENDB-2)
- 28 I hate to see that evening sun go down
 Because my daddy he's done left this town (HENDK-2)
- 29 The woman I love, she must be out of town
 She left me this morning with a face that's full of frowns
 (JEFB-20)
- 30 Brownskin girl is deceitful, till she gets you all worn down
 She get all your pocket change; she going to drive you from her
town (JEFB-30)
- 31 It makes a man feel bad, when competition ???
 Now there's so much competition, I believe I'll leave your town
 (JEFB-43)
- 32 Standing at the station; watch my baby leave town
 I feel disgusted; no peace can be found (JEFB-45)
- 33 Mmmm going to run that black snake down
 I ain't seen my mama, since black snake taken her away from town
 (JEFB-58)
- 34 I hate to see the evening sun go down
 That's the time my baby left this town
 I get the blues, when the evening sun goes down (JOHAL-2)

- 35 Straight for the madhouse I'm surely bound
Thinking about the gal who left this town
How I despair, when the evening sun goes down (JOHAL-2)
- 36 Oh your time now; be mine after a while
Give me my fare; I sure will leave this town (JOHEB-2)
- 37 I hate to see that evening sun go down
Because that's the time my baby left this town
And I get so blue, when the evening sun go down (JOHLO-12)
- 38 My friends up gave, and they cannot be found
Because my gal done quit me, and she has left this town
Oh how it grieves me, when that evening sun goes down (JOHLO-12)
- 39 Straight for the madhouse I am surely bound
Thinking about the gal who left this town
How I feel desperate, when that evening sun goes down (JOHLO-12)
- 40 The chief of police done tore my playhouse down
No use in grieving; I'm going to leave this town (JONM-10)
- 41 When your money's gone; friends have turned you down
And you wander around just like a hound
Then you got to say, let me go away from this old town (JONM-19)
- 42 I remember the day when I was living at Lula town
My man did so many wrong things, that I had to leave the town (LEEB-1)
- 43 Depot agent please turn your depot around
My woman done quit me now; going to leave your town (LEWN-4)
- 44 Now I've rambled and I've rambled, until I broke my poor self
down
I believe to my soul that the little girl is out of town (LOCK-1)
- 45 Now baby don't you worry, just because I'm out of town
All my love I have for you darling; swear it can't be turned
around (McCL-5)
- 46 Mr. depot agent close your depot down
The woman I'm loving, she's fixing to blow this town (MCCOC-2)
- 47 If you don't want me, (hey)(please) don't dog me around
Oh just hand me my suitcase; I'll leave your Dallas town (McCOM-1)

- 48 Now if you don't want me baby, please don't dog me around
My home ain't here, and I can leave your town (McTR-17)
- 49 Oh Lord Lord wonder where is my chauffeur now
Got my Cadillac Eight; done cadillaced out of town (MEMM-19)
- 50 Hey believe I'll get drunk; tear this old barrelhouse down
Because I ain't got no money, but I can hobo out of town (MEMM-29)
- 51 Reason why I start; why I lowdown
My gal done quit me; I got to leave this town (MOSSB-2)
- 52 And I told my woman Lord, (just) before I left her town
Don't she let nobody tear her barrelhouse down (NEWB-5)
- 53 What will you do, when your good friend throws you down
Going to catch me a plane; babe going to leave your town (OWEG-1)
- 54 The man I love, I know he's out of town
And when I find him, he better not be messing around (PERKG-1)
- 55 Lord the Lula women Lord ??? up and down
Lord you ought to been there; Lord see the womens all leaving town (PATT-19)
- 56 And I keeps on telling my rider, well she was *shivering* down
Lord that jelly-baking strut will make a monkey-man leave his town (PATT-26)
- 57 Boys I can't stand up; I can't sit down
The man I love has done left this town (RAIN-5)
- 58 My head's going around and around, since my daddy left town
I don't know if the river is running up or down
But there's one thing certain; babe mama's going to leave town (RAIN-5)
- 59 Lord pretty mama what's the matter now
You know if you didn't want me, why didn't you leave me back in town (REEDR-2)
- 60 Ticket agent ease your window down
Because my man's done quit me, and tried to leave this town (SMIB-4)
- 61 When you broken-hearted, and your man is out of town
Got to the river; take a chair and sit down (SMIB-5)
- 62 I hate to see that evening sun go down
For my baby, he's done left this town (SMIB-31)

- 63 Uncle Sam has told me that things are ??? around
He took all the booze away, and my good brown from town
(SMIC-10)
- 64 I stood at the station, I said station; saw my man leaving town
When that man quit me, that's what brought me down
(SMIC-27)
- 65 If I had my machine, I wouldn't worry about leaving town
I'd get on the Four-A Highway, and God knows I'd roll that
highway down (SPRU-6)
- 66 Coloured man take the blues; he walk to the river and set down
Get stuck by a nehi mama, and he turn right short around
Well mama wonder what's going on, mama since I left town
(STOK-16)
- 67 Now I'm a lonely guy, following the browns
I think about the times, since I left town (STOK-17)
- 68 The woman I love treat me so unkind
Going to pack my grip, and leave this lonesome town
(TAMP-1)
- 69 You got ways, dragging my heart around
Some of these days baby, I'm going to leave this town
(TEMP-4)
- 70 And before I would stand to see my baby leave this town
I would beat the train to the crossing, and burn that doggone
bridge down (THOR-10)
- 71 I believe to my soul mama, got to leave your town
I got no pretty mama, talk baby-talk to me (UNKA-3)
- 72 I felt like falling from the treetop to the ground
Should have been my old babe, and she was leaving town
(UNKA-5)
- 73 They sent out a law for everybody to leave town
But when I got the news, I was high-water bound (WALLS-7)
- 74 Well the blues in my house from the rooftop to the ground
And the blues everywhere, because my good gal have left this town
(WELD-8)
- 75 Now the prosecutor questioned me partner; the clerk he wrote it
down
The Judge say I'll give you one chance Nolah, but you would not
leave this town (WELS-1)

- 76 Oh the blues ain't nothing, but a feeling that will get you down
Falling out with your man; you feel like leaving town
(WHIG-3)
- 77 Aberdeen is my home, but the men's don't want me around
They know I will take these women, and take them out of town
(WHIN-13)
- 78 My train is made up; ready to leave this town
You can think about your baby, when the sun goes down
(WIGG-1)
- 79 Now the judge going to sentence me, and the clerk going to write
it down
So they accuse me of stealing; I fixing to leave your town
(WILK-1)
- 80 Ohhhh, look where the sun going down
I ain't had no righteous woman, since my baby blowed this town
(WILLH-2)
- 81 Says the rooster crow and the hen walk around
I ain't seen my woman, since she left this town (WILLJ-4)
- 82 I got a brownskin woman; she don't pay me no mind
And I know you going to miss me, baby when I leave this town
(WILLJ-8)
- 83 Now my baby have changed her way of living; I mean she's changed
all around
Because she even changed her house number; oh you know she done
moved to another town (WILLS-34)
- 84 Now you going to keep on baby you know fooling around
Oh you know the police is going to run you clean out of town
(WILLS-36)
- 85 And it's hey mama, I'm going to leave your town
I ain't got no man to put my arms around (WOOH-1)



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